

STORY BY KYO SHIRODAIRA

ART BY CHASHIBA KATASE



IN/SPECTRE

3

IN/SPECTRE

3



STORY: KYO SHIRODAIRA
MANGA: CHASHIBA KATASE

NOVEL VERSION CHARACTER DESIGNS
HIRO KIYOHARA

CONTENTS

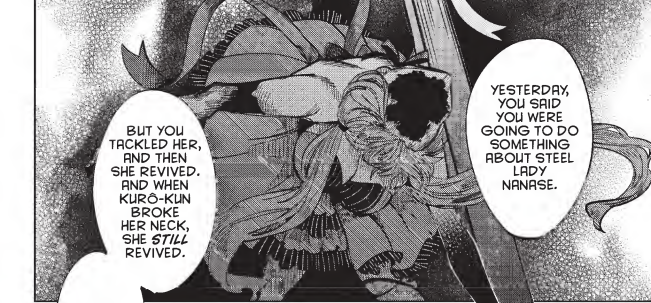
CHAPTER 5: "A MONSTER OF THE IMAGINATION" 3

CHAPTER 6: "KARIN NANASE
AND HATSUMI NANASE" 75

TRAVELING BONUS MANGA 173



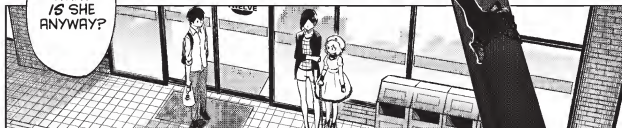




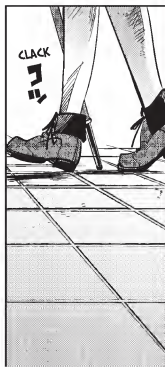
BUT YOU
TACKLED HER,
AND THEN
SHE REVIVED.
AND WHEN
KURŌ-KUN
BROKE
HER NECK,
SHE *STILL*
REVIVED.

YESTERDAY,
YOU SAID
YOU WERE
GOING TO DO
SOMETHING
ABOUT STEEL
LADY
NANASE.

WHAT
IS SHE
ANYWAY?



CLACK
??



IS IT
POSSIBLE
TO
DESTROY
HER?



SHE'S A
MONSTER.



I KNOW
THAT.
LET ME
REPHRASE.

through September

IT IS.

WHIRL
3

I CALLED
YOU HERE
TONIGHT
TO
DISCUSS
THAT VERY
THING.

BUT I'LL
NEED
YOUR
HELP,
SAKI-
SAN.

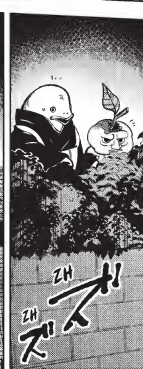
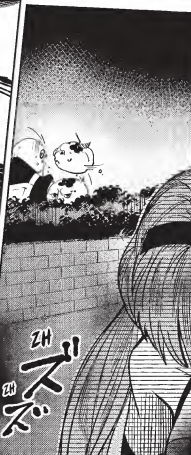
STEEL
LADY NANASE
ISN'T YOUR
NORMAL,
GARDEN
VARIETY
SPECTRE.

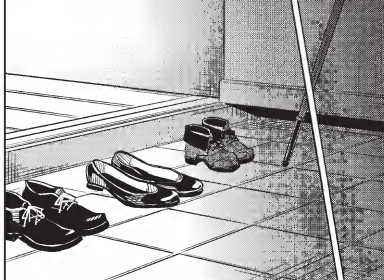
コナ
HUMM

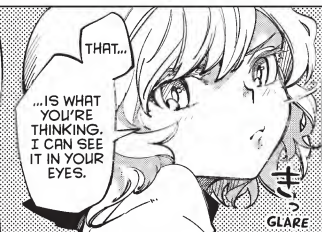


SHE'S A
MONSTER
OF THE
IMAGINA-
TION.

SHE WAS
CREATED BY
THE FANTASIES
AND DESIRES
OF HUMANS
LIVING IN
THE MODERN
AGE.









AND WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU CAN GET AWAY WITH THAT ATTITUDE AFTER ABANDONING YOUR GIRLFRIEND FOR AN ENTIRE WEEK?!



OH, THAT WAS YOU? I THOUGHT IT WAS A SPAMBOT.

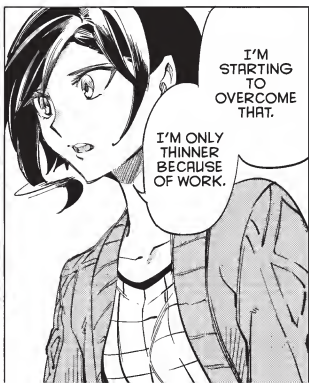


YOU COULD AT LEAST REPLY TO MY TEXTS!



...YOU TWO SURE ARE CLOSE.







IT'S NOT
LIKE KURŌ-
KUN ENDED
UP THIS WAY
BECAUSE HE
WANTED TO.



I JUST
SAID IT'S
NOT YOUR
FAULT.



NOM
WELL,
NEVER
MIND ALL
THAT.
LET'S GET
BACK TO
BUSINESS.

MUNCH
もり

もり
MUNCH



WE BROKE
UP BEFORE
I COULD
SORT
OUT MY
FEELINGS.

SO I
THOUGHT
IF I WERE
TO SEE
HIM AGAIN,
I WOULD
BE MORE
SHAKEN UP.



BUT I'M
SURPRISINGLY
CALM ABOUT
THIS. I
WONDER IF I
HAVE HER TO
THANK FOR
THAT?

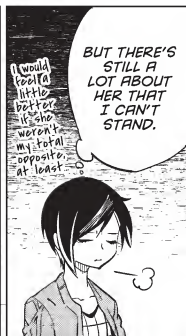


KURÔ-KUN,

WHEN YOU WERE FIGHTING STEEL LADY NANASE BACK THERE, WAS IT BECAUSE IWANAGA-SAN ORDERED YOU TO?



...YES, LET'S DO THAT.



I would feel a little better if she weren't my total opposite, at least.

BUT THERE'S STILL A LOT ABOUT HER THAT I CAN'T STAND.



...I DID COME TO MAKURAZAKA BECAUSE OF A PHONE CALL FROM IWANAGA.

BUT I DIDN'T MEAN TO RUN INTO STEEL LADY NANASE.



WELL...



BONK



...WHEN
A GOBLIN
CAT CAME
TO ME
FOR HELP.
STEEL LADY
NANASE
WAS AFTER
IT.

M
R
O
W



AFTER
I GOT
TO THE
STATION,
I HEADED
FOR
IWANAGA'S
HOTEL...



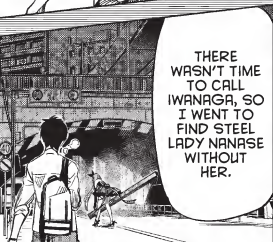
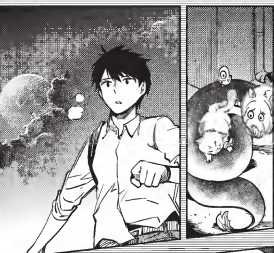
BUT SINCE
IWANAGA
STARTED
DRAGGING
ME AROUND,
MAKING ME
HELP HER
SOLVE
SUPERNATURAL
PROBLEMS...

THINGS LIKE
THAT CAT
USED TO
AVOID ME LIKE
THE PLAGUE,



"HE'LL
EVEN LISTEN
TO OUR
TROUBLES
WHEN OUR
LADY ISN'T
AROUND."

...I'VE BEEN
GETTING A NEW
REPUTATION.
"OUR 'LADY OF
ONE EYE AND
ONE LEG' HAS A
TIGHT LEASH ON
HIM. HE WON'T
DO ANYTHING
TOO CRAZY."



THERE WASN'T TIME TO CALL IWANAGA, SO I WENT TO FIND STEEL LADY NANASE WITHOUT HER.



...SO NOW THEY'VE ACTUALLY STARTED COMING TO ME FOR HELP.



I DIDN'T KNOW THAT SENPAI HAD ALREADY ARRIVED THERE.

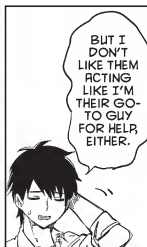


SO A WANDERING GHOST TOLD ME, AND I RAN OFF TO THE SAME LOCATION.

MEANWHILE, I HAD SPREAD THE WORD AMONG THE SPECTRES THAT THEY WERE TO REPORT TO ME THE VERY SECOND STEEL LADY NANASE WAS SIGHTED.



ANYWAY...

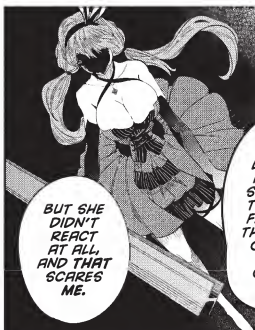


BUT I DON'T LIKE THEM ACTING LIKE I'M THEIR GO-TO GUY FOR HELP, EITHER.



I SEE.

WELL, GOOD FOR YOU. WITH YOUR NEW REPUTATION, THE KAPPA WON'T RUN AWAY FROM YOU NEXT TIME.



BUT SHE DIDN'T REACT AT ALL, AND THAT SCARES ME.

JUST LOOKING AT ME IS SUPPOSED TO STRIKE FEAR INTO THE HEARTS OF YOKAI AND GHOSTS.

STEEL LADY NANASE WASN'T AFRAID—NOT WHEN SHE SAW ME, NOT EVEN AFTER SHE TOUCHED ME.



INDEED.





SOME OF THEM
WOULD RAMBLE
ON IN A TERRIFIED
DELIRIUM ABOUT
AN IMPOSSIBLE
AMALGAMATION
THAT REEKED
OF BOTH A FISH
MARKET AND
A BARN.

IN THE EYES
OF INHUMAN
CREATURES,
YOU'RE A MIX
OF A HUMAN,
A MERMAID,
AND A
KUDAN.

AND BOY
HOWDY, IS IT AN
UGLY, SINISTER,
JUMBLED UP
MESS. OR SO
THEY TELL ME.

APPARENTLY,
HE'S A
MONSTER
EVEN BY
MONSTER
STANDARDS.

STAB

STAB

Not that
I'm sure of
any of the
details

uh..

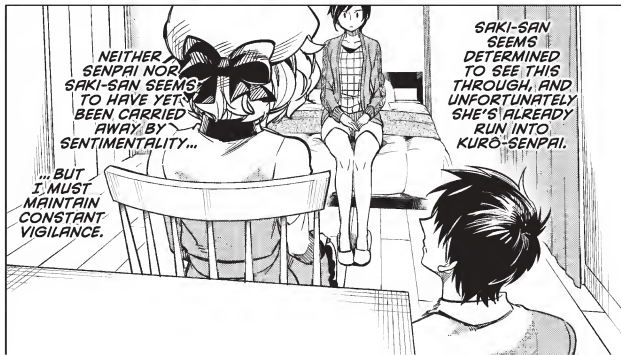
I look?

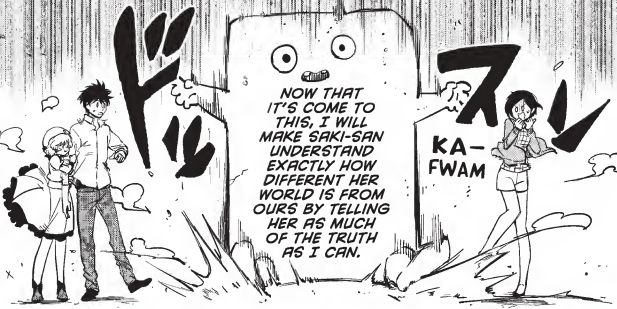


DESPITE
ALL THAT,
STEEL
LADY
NANASE
DOESN'T
REACT TO
KURŌ-
KUN.

...ALL
RIGHT,
IWANAGA-
SAN.

...YOU SAID
SHE WAS A
"MONSTER
OF THE
IMAGINATION."
WHAT DOES
THAT MEAN?





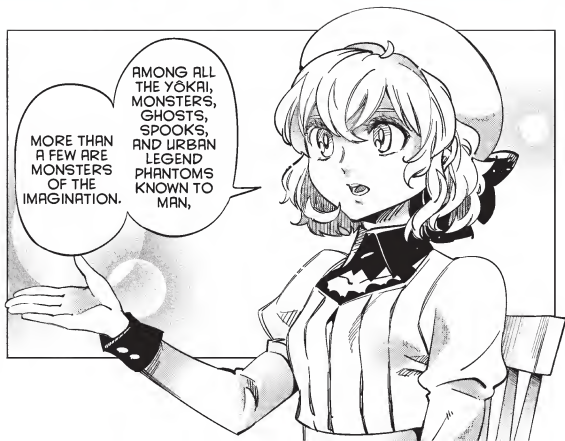
THAT IS
THE BEST
PLAN!

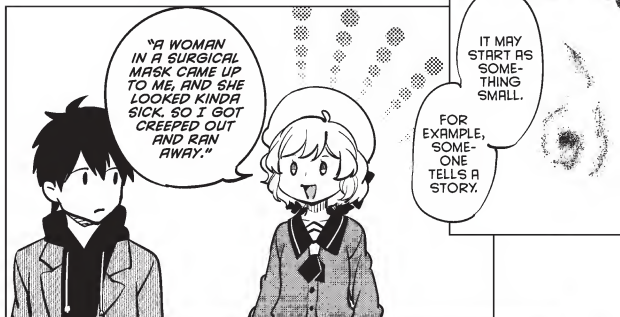


I WILL FORCE
HER TO
ACKNOWLEDGE
THE CHASM
BETWEEN US!

MORE THAN
A FEW ARE
MONSTERS
OF THE
IMAGINATION.

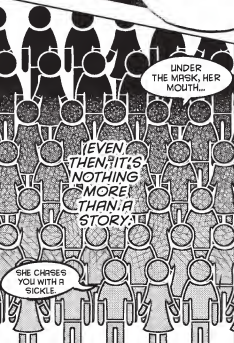
AMONG ALL
THE YŌKAI,
MONSTERS,
GHOSTS,
SPOOKS,
AND URBAN
LEGEND
PHANTOMS
KNOWN TO
MAN,







...SO THEY EMBELLISH IT WITH A LIE LIKE THAT. AT THIS POINT, IT'S STILL JUST A PIECE OF FICTION.



UNDER THE MASK, HER MOUTH...

(EVEN THEN, IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN A STORY.)

SHE CHASES YOU WITH A SICKLE.

THE RUMORS SPREAD BEYOND LOCAL BOUNDARIES, ACROSS THE ENTIRE COUNTRY.

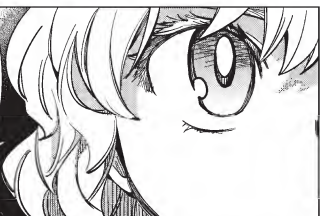


SHE ASKS, "AM I PRETTY?"

EVENTUALLY, THE STORY SPREADS BY WORD OF MOUTH.



A YOUNG WOMAN WITH A MASK...



THE PROBLEM IS WHEN IT IS *GIVEN A NAME.*

IT'S A LENGTHY COLLECTION OF WORDS WITH NO POWER OR PHYSICAL FORM.

A young woman wearing a surgical mask comes along and asks, "Am I pretty?" If you tell her that she is, she'll take off her mask and say, "What about now?" Under the mask, her mouth is slit open from ear to ear. If you tell her she's not pretty, she'll come after you with a sickle. If you try to run away, she'll come at you with lightning speed and



"SLIT-MOUTH
WOMAN."



THAT SINGLE
NAME TAKES
ALL THE VAGUE
RAMBLINGS,
PUTS THEM
TOGETHER, AND
FORMS THEM
INTO ONE
SOLID IDEA.

SLIT-MOUTH
WOMAN.

A NAME THAT
EXPRESSES THE
WHOLE LEGEND,
GIVING IT A
GENERAL SHAPE
IN JUST ONE
PHRASE.

... BUT
FICTION
THAT HAS
BEEN GIVEN
A NAME
AND A
SHAPE...

THEY
ALL
START
OUT AS
JUST
SOME-
THING
SOMEONE
MADE
UP...

... PASSES
THROUGH
THE MINDS OF
THOUSANDS,
TENS OF
THOUSANDS,
HUNDREDS OF
THOUSANDS OF
PEOPLE,
AND TAKES
ROOT.

AND
SOMETIMES,
LITTLE BY
LITTLE, IT IS
GIVEN FLESH
AND GAINS
A PHYSICAL
FORM.

OH, I
KNOW
THAT ONE.
THE SLIT-
MOUTH
WOMAN,
RIGHT?

I HEARD A
REALLY SCARY
RUMOR! A
WOMAN WITH A
SLIT MOUTH WILL
COME AFTER YOU
WITH A SICKLE...



IT'S THE
NAME THAT
FORMS
THAT IMAGE
IN EACH
INDIVIDUAL'S
MIND.

HUMAN-FACED
DOG

HEADLESS RIDER

HANAKO-
SAN

THUS...

RED
CAPE

TEKE-
TEKE

MURASAKI
BABAA

KUNE-
KUNE

MERRY-SAN



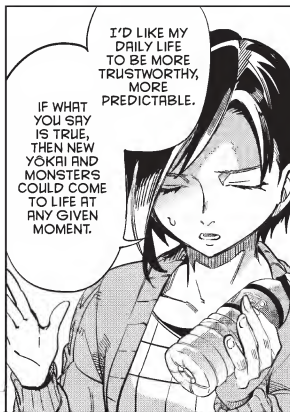


YOU
EXPECT ME
TO BELIEVE
STUFF
LIKE THAT
HAPPENS
EVERY DAY?

...IT
SOUNDS
LIKE
SOMETHING
FROM
OCCULT
LITERATURE
OR A
HORROR
MOVIE.



AND
THAT'S
HOW HUMAN
IMAGINATION
CAN GIVE
LIFE TO
MONSTERS.



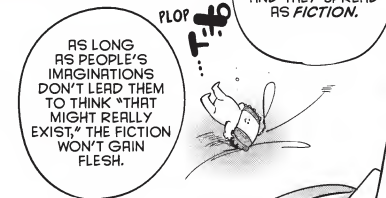
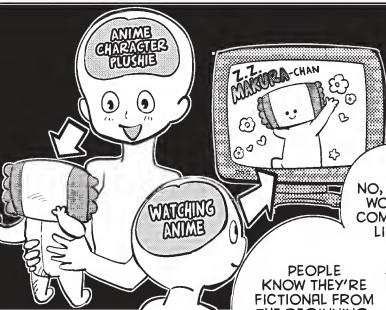
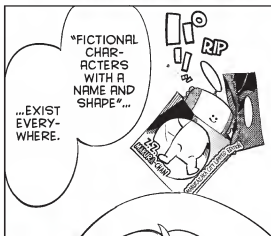
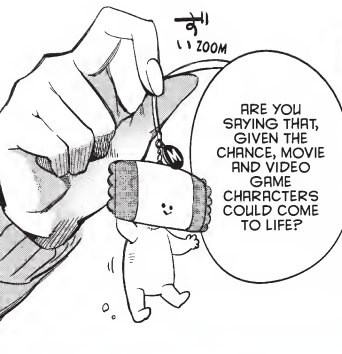
IF WHAT
YOU SAY
IS TRUE,
THEN NEW
YŌKAI AND
MONSTERS
COULD COME
TO LIFE AT
ANY GIVEN
MOMENT.

I'D LIKE MY
DAILY LIFE
TO BE MORE
TRUSTWORTHY,
MORE
PREDICTABLE.

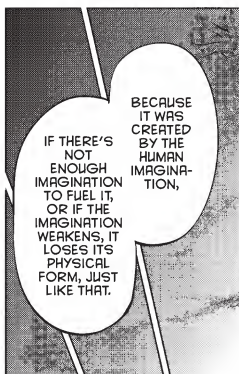
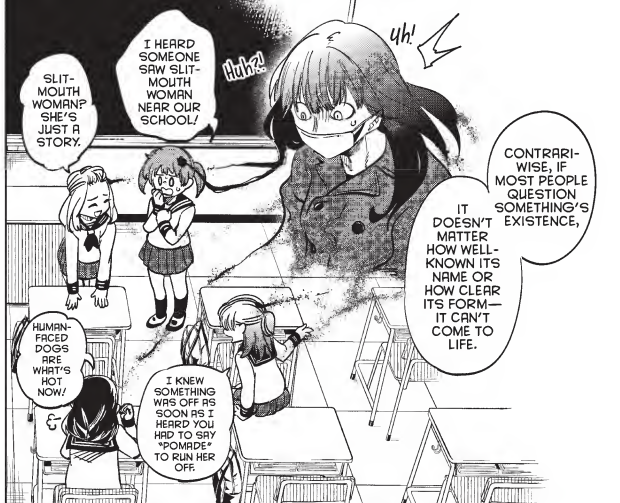


GRK
△
△

SAYS THE
WOMAN
WHO'S SEEN A
KAPPA AND A
GHOST?



AS LONG AS PEOPLE'S IMAGINATIONS DON'T LEAD THEM TO THINK "THAT MIGHT REALLY EXIST," THE FICTION WON'T GAIN FLESH.





EXCEPT ON
VERY RARE
OCCASIONS,
NEW YÖKAI AND
MONSTERS
DON'T STICK
AROUND
LONG.

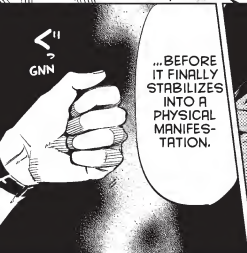


IT'S NOT
EASY FOR
RUMORS TO
TAKE ROOT IN
THE MINDS OF
HUNDREDS OF
THOUSANDS OF
PEOPLE.



PAH
120

SAKI-
SAN.

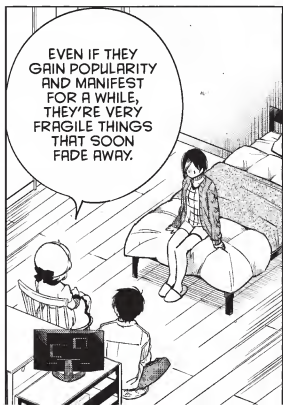
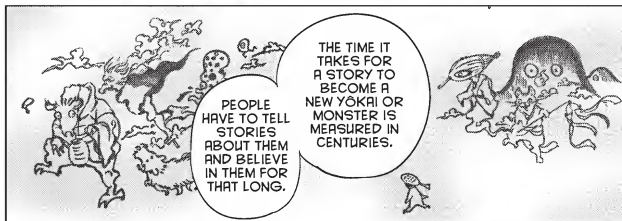


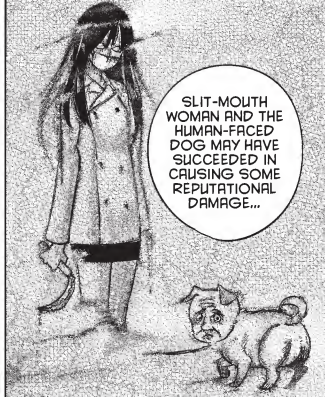
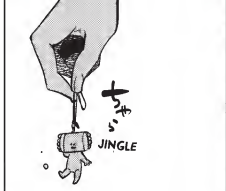
...BEFORE
IT FINALLY
STABILIZES
INTO A
PHYSICAL
MANIFES-
TATION.



IT HAS
TO BE
TOLD
AGAIN AND
AGAIN, AND
QUESTIONED
AGAIN AND
AGAIN...

EVEN IF
A LOT OF
PEOPLE DO
CONSIDER THE
STORY, A LOT
OF THEM WILL
DOUBT ITS
LIKELI-
HOOD.





SLIT-MOUTH
WOMAN AND THE
HUMAN-FACED
DOG MAY HAVE
SUCCEEDED IN
CAUSING SOME
REPUTATIONAL
DAMAGE...



...BUT IN
THE END,
THEY FADED
AWAY WITH-
OUT EVER
CAUSING
ANY DIRECT
HARM.

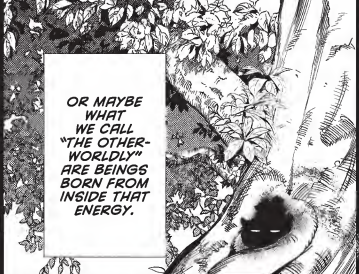


I'M
SURE
THAT'S
JUST
THE WAY
THINGS
ARE.



THERE'S
SOME KIND OF
ENERGY THAT
BUILDS UP IN
PLACES, THAT
CAN TWIST
LOGIC, CAN
BE ANYTHING,
CHANGE INTO
ANYTHING.

THIS
WORLD
ISN'T AS
STABLE
AS WE
THINK.



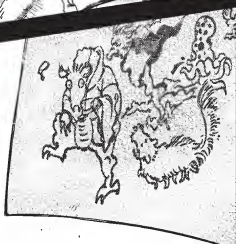
OR MAYBE
WHAT
WE CALL
"THE OTHER-
WORLDLY"
ARE BEINGS
BORN FROM
INSIDE THAT
ENERGY.



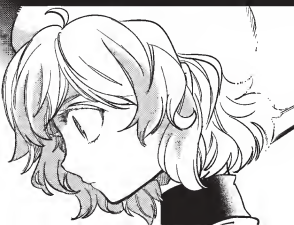
IF THAT
ENERGY
GATHERS
AROUND
THAT NAME—
THAT CORE—
IT PRODUCES
A PHYSICAL
FORM.



THEN A
HUMAN'S
WARPED
FANTASY
FLOWS
INTO IT.



IF YOU
WERE TO
GO BACK A
THOUSAND,
TWO
THOUSAND
YEARS,
OR EVEN
MORE YEARS,
MAYBE ALL
YŌKAI AND
SPECTRES...



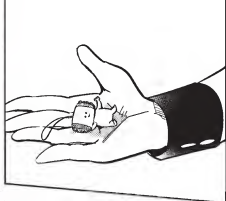
... CAN BE
TRACED
BACK TO
HUMAN
IMAGINA-
TION.





BUT
EVEN SO,
STEEL LADY
NANASE
IS TOO
DIFFERENT
FROM WHAT
YOU'RE
TELLING
ME.

SO I CAN'T
DENY THAT
THE HUMAN
IMAGINATION
COULD CREATE
A MONSTER.



WELL... I
KNOW THAT
GHOSTS
AND YŌKAI
DO EXIST.



SHE
HAS BEEN
GIVEN
THE NAME
"STEEL
LADY
NANASE"...

...ALONG
WITH A VERY
DISTINCT
IMAGE—THE
DRESS,
STEEL
GIRDER,
AND BIG
BREASTS.

BUT IT
HASN'T EVEN
BEEN A YEAR
SINCE KARIN
NANASE DIED.



WHAT?

YES,
EXACTLY.



NORMALLY,
EVEN IF SHE
HAD TAKEN
PHYSICAL
FORM, SHE
WOULD HAVE
DISAPPEARED
SOON THERE-
AFTER.

GENERALLY,
IMAGINARY
MONSTERS
ARE NOTHING
TO BE
AFRAID OF.

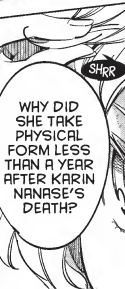
AND YET
SHE HAS A
PHYSICAL
FORM AND
ENOUGH
STRENGTH
TO KILL
PEOPLE.

SHE MAY
BE BIG ON THE
INTERNET, BUT
SHE'S NOT
MAINSTREAM
ENOUGH TO HAVE
TAKEN ROOT IN
THE MINDS OF
HUNDREDS OF
THOUSANDS OF
PEOPLE.

SHE'S INCREDIBLY
DANGEROUS.



SHRR

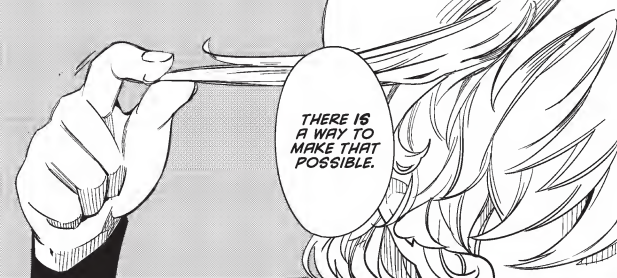


SHRR

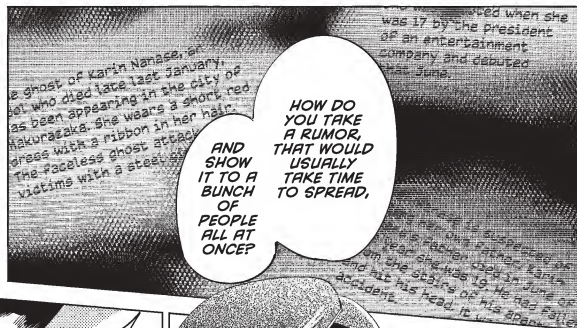
WHY DID
SHE TAKE
PHYSICAL
FORM LESS
THAN A YEAR
AFTER KARIN
NANASE'S
DEATH?



SO
HOW DID
STEEL LADY
NANASE
GAIN SO
MUCH
POWER?



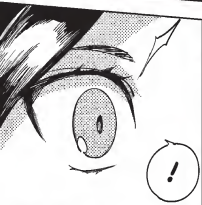
THERE IS
A WAY TO
MAKE THAT
POSSIBLE.



...ghost of Karin Nanase, an
actress who died late last January,
has been appearing in the city of
Nakurasaka. She wears a short red
dress with a ribbon in her hair.
The faceless ghost attacks
victims with a steel sword.

AND
SHOW
IT TO A
BUNCH
OF
PEOPLE
ALL AT
ONCE?

HOW DO
YOU TAKE
A RUMOR,
THAT WOULD
USUALLY
TAKE TIME
TO SPREAD,



...BUT THE
STORY WAS
ONLY PICKED
UP BY A SMALL
SECTION OF
THE MEDIA.

PEOPLE
ARE ONLY
REALLY
TALKING
ABOUT HER
ON THE
INTERNET...

THE
INTERNET.

EXACTLY.

PAH

He

GATHER
THEM
INTO ONE
PLACE?

THE
INTERNET
CAN SEND
INFORMATION
ACROSS THE
WORLD IN
LESS THAN A
SECOND.

IT CAN BE
ACCESSED BY
BILLIONS.

AND IT
CAN BE USED
TO GATHER
AN ENDLESS
AMOUNT OF
VARYING IDEAS
INTO ONE
PLACE.

LIKE
THAT
STEEL
LADY
NANASE
WIKI?

...OH.

Hrrm...

WELL...
YES,
IT DID
SPREAD,
BUT...

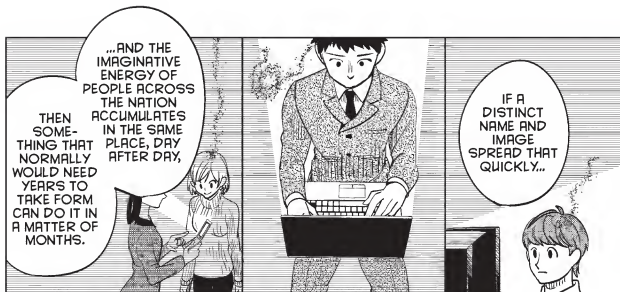
THAT SITE
IS WHY HER
NAME AND
DESCRIPTION
HAVE BEEN
DEFINED AND
DISSEMINATED
AT SUCH AN
ALARMING
RATE.

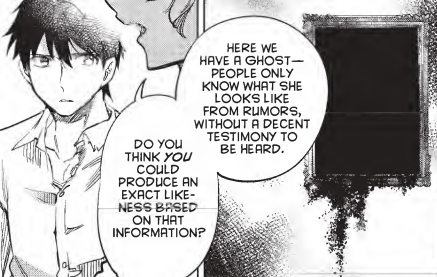
YOU KNOW
OF IT? THAT
WILL MAKE
THIS EASIER.

RUMORS
AREN'T
ENOUGH
TO CREATE
SUCH A
CLEAR
PICTURE.

FURTHER-
MORE, THAT
ILLUSTRA-
TION ON
THE TOP
PAGE.

IT TAKES
TIME FOR
EVERYONE'S
MENTAL IMAGE
TO FUSE INTO
ONE, BUT THAT
PAINTING LET
IT HAPPEN
INSTANTLY.





HERE WE
HAVE A GHOST—
PEOPLE ONLY
KNOW WHAT SHE
LOOKS LIKE
FROM RUMORS,
WITHOUT A DECENT
TESTIMONY TO
BE HEARD.

DO YOU
THINK *YOU*
COULD
PRODUCE AN
EXACT LIKE-
NESS BASED
ON THAT
INFORMATION?



...NOW
THAT YOU
MENTION
IT, YES.

SO?

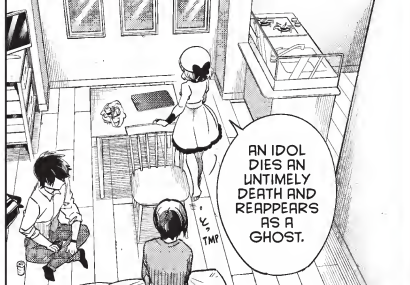


OF COURSE
YOU COULDN'T.
IT HAPPENED
THE OTHER WAY
AROUND.



THE
ILLUS-
TRATION
WASN'T
DRAWN
BASED ON
STORIES
OF THE
GHOST.

THE
GHOST
TOOK THAT
SPECIFIC
FORM
BECAUSE
THAT
ILLUSTRATION
HAS CREATED
THAT IMAGE
OF STEEL
LADY NANASE
IN SO MANY
PEOPLE'S
MINDS.



110
CUES #

THE WIKI
DIDN'T
START
BECAUSE
OF A
GHOST.

IT'S ALL
BACK-
WARDS.

WHIRL

THE
GHOST
WAS BORN
BECAUSE
OF THE
WIKI.

TKKA
TKKA
TKKA



YOU
MIGHT
SAY THAT
THIS VERY
SITE...

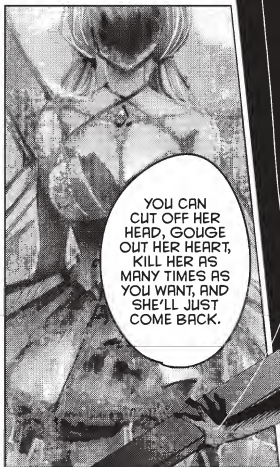
...IS THE
TRUE
STEEL
LADY
NANASE.



鋼人七瀬まどめサイト
STEEL LADY NANASE WIKI



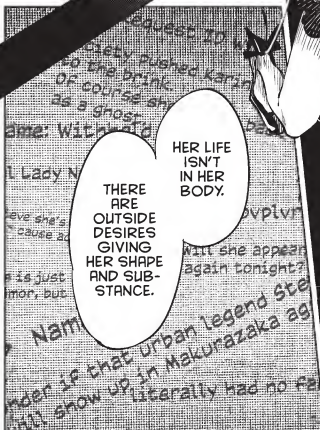
鋼人七瀬について	七瀬かりんについて
ABOUT STEEL LADY NANASE	ABOUT KASIN NANASE
掲示板	考察ブログまどめ
FORUMS	RELEVANT BLOGS
	OTHER オカルト版まどめ



YOU CAN
CUT OFF HER
HEAD, GOUGE
OUT HER HEART,
KILL HER AS
MANY TIMES AS
YOU WANT, AND
SHE'LL JUST
COME BACK.

A MONSTER
OF THE
IMAGINATION
IS FUELED BY
THE POWER
OF IMAGINA-
TION.

AS LONG
AS THAT
IMAGINATION
PERPETUATES
FANTASIES
ABOUT HER, AS
LONG AS PEOPLE
CONSTANTLY
HOPE FOR HER
TO BE REAL,
STEEL LADY
NANASE WILL BE
IMMORTAL.

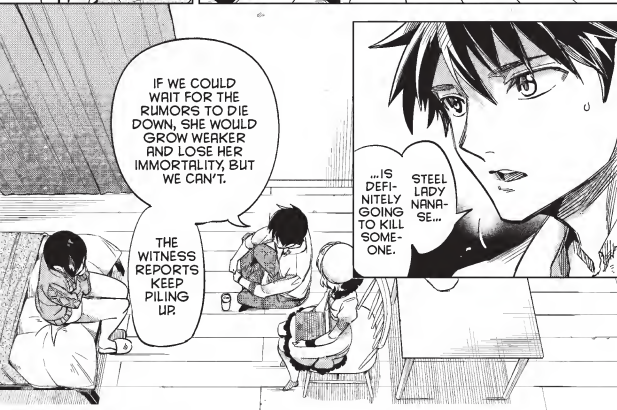


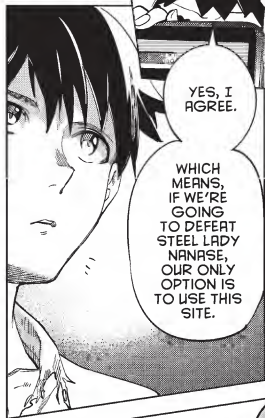
HER LIFE
ISN'T
IN HER
BODY.

THERE
ARE
OUTSIDE
DESIRES
GIVING
HER SHAPE
AND SUB-
STANCE.









YES, I AGREE.

WHICH MEANS, IF WE'RE GOING TO DEFEAT STEEL LADY NANASE, OUR ONLY OPTION IS TO USE THIS SITE.



I'VE SEEN THE WIKI, TOO, AND I CAN DEFINITELY SEE HOW IT'S PUSHING HER TO BE MORE VIOLENT.

I DIDN'T COUNT ON AN IMAGINARY MONSTER GETTING THIS STRONG.



IF IT'S HUMAN IMAGINATION THAT'S MAKING HER IMMORTAL, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO CONQUER THAT IMAGINATION.





INFOR-
MATION.

WE WILL USE
THAT AS THE
FOUNDATION
TO CONSTRUCT
A LEGEND THAT
SURPASSES
THE STEEL
LADY NANASE
RUMORS.

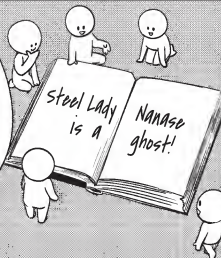


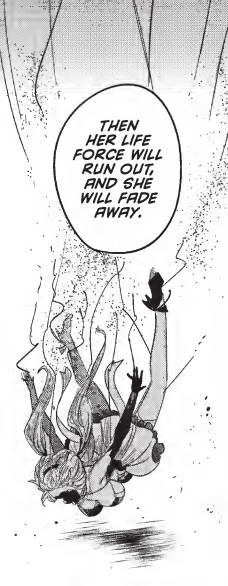
GLANCE

MRK

I WANT YOU TO
PROVIDE US
WITH ACCURATE
INFORMATION
ABOUT KARIN
NANASE'S
DEATH.

THE STEEL
LADY IS AN
IMAGINARY
MONSTER
CREATED
FROM STORIES
ABOUT HER AS
A GHOST—A
PHANTOM
OF URBAN
LEGEND.





THEN
HER LIFE
FORCE WILL
RUN OUT,
AND SHE
WILL FADE
AWAY.



TO
ERADICATE
HER, WE
MUST OVER-
WRITE THE
STORY,



REPLACING
THE GHOST
STORY WITH
ONE THAT
HAS NO SUCH
NONSENSE.



IF THE
PEOPLE WHO
BELIEVE IN STEEL
LADY NANASE
ACCEPT OUR NEW
VERSION OF
THE STORY...

Steel Lady
is a
NOT

Nanase
ghost!



AND
PROVE
THAT IT
WAS A
LIE?



YOU MEAN
FIND A
RATIONAL
EXPLANA-
TION FOR
THE URBAN
LEGEND,



A STORY
WITH NO
GHOST...



THAT'S
IMPOSSIBLE.



IF THE
RUMOR HAS
MORE IMPACT,
AND SEEMS
PLAUSIBLE IN
ANY WAY,

THEN
LIES CAN
REPLACE THE
TRUTH, EVEN
IF THERE ARE
SOME MINOR
CONTRADICTIONS.

ONCE A
RUMOR'S
SPREAD,
PEOPLE WON'T
ACCEPT THE
RATIONAL
EXPLANATION,
EVEN IF IT'S
TRUE.



if those
rumors are true...

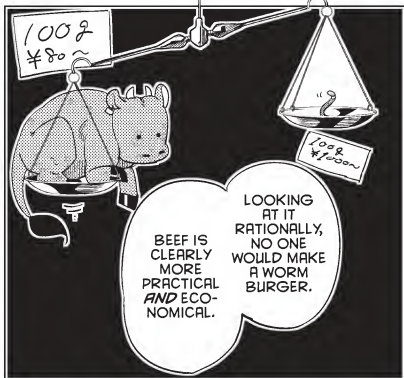
ALL YOU
CAN THINK
ABOUT IS
THAT IMAGE—
THE FEAR THAT
MAYBE THEY
WOULD USE
SOME MYSTERY
MEAT.

WHETHER
YOU BELIEVE
IT OR NOT,
THE RUMOR
STICKS
AROUND IN
THE CORNER
OF YOUR
MIND.



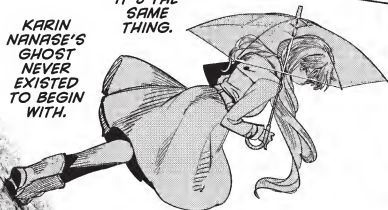
FOR
EXAMPLE,
TAKE
ANOTHER
URBAN
LEGEND.

YOU'VE
HEARD ABOUT
THE FAST-FOOD
PLACE THAT
SUPPOSEDLY
MADE ITS
BURGERS FROM
WORM MEAT
INSTEAD OF
BEEF.

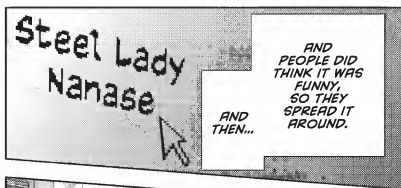
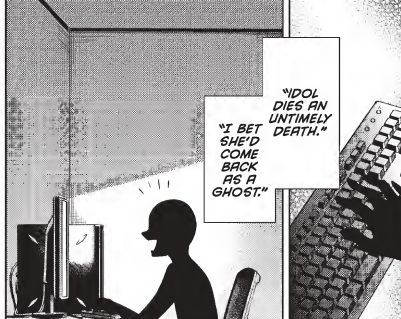


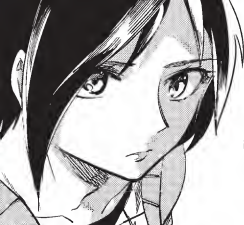
KARIN
NANASE'S
GHOST
NEVER
EXISTED
TO BEGIN
WITH.

IT'S THE
SAME
THING.



JUST
BECAUSE
SOMETHING
IS TRUE
DOESN'T
MEAN PEOPLE
WILL BELIEVE
IT OVER THE
LEGEND.





THE TRUTH DOESN'T ALWAYS WIN. AND STEEL LADY NANASE IS TRUTH.



WHICH IS WHY I WILL FIGHT HER WITH A RATIONAL FICTION.

I heard she's been appearing in Makuratake.

<351> Name: Withheld by Request 09/03 10:54 10:54
Dude, I've been looking at the sighting reports, and she has to be some kind of phantom.

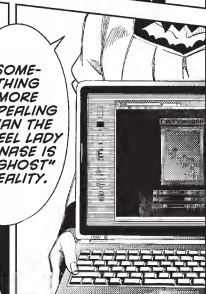
<352> Name: Withheld by Request 09/03 10:54 10:54
I want to get a picture of Steel Lady Nanase.

<353> Name: Withheld by Request 09/03 10:54 10:54
I wonder if that urban legend Steel Lady Nanase will show up in Makuratake again tonight. It's so spooky.

<354> Name: Withheld by Request 09/03 11:55 11:55
Society pushed Karin Nanase to the brink. Of course she'd come back as a ghost.

<355> Name: Withheld by Request 09/03 12:04 12:04
I can't believe she's getting close to people to cause accidents. Hey, try being less conspicuous.

<356> Name: Withheld by Request 09/03 12:11 12:11
If she's a vengeful ghost, wouldn't she, like, curse everyone?

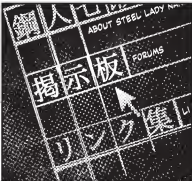


SOME-THING MORE APPEALING THAN THE "STEEL LADY NANASE IS A GHOST" REALITY.

I WILL POST THE "STEEL LADY NANASE IS FICTION" STORY DIRECTLY ONTO THE WIKI.

Name

submit





HUH?

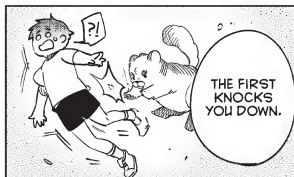
YES.



SAKI-SAN,
HAVE YOU
HEARD OF
THE YŌKAI
KNOWN AS
KAMAITACHI,
OR SICKLE
WEASELS?



*A
RATIONAL
FICTION?*



THE FIRST
KNOCKS
YOU DOWN.



THE
SECOND
CUTS
YOU.



AND THE
THIRD ONE
APPLIES
SALVE AND
LEAVES.



THEY'RE
YŌKAI THAT
LOOK LIKE
WEASELS. THEY
RIDE UP ON THE
WIND AND CUT
PEOPLE, BUT
WITHOUT
HURTING THEM,
AND THEN
DISAPPEAR.

OR I
THINK
THAT'S
WHAT I
HEARD.



YES. THEY
ACT IN
GROUPS OF
THREE.

"THERE USED
TO BE A LOT
OF THEM IN THE
MOUNTAINS AND
THE FROZEN
NORTH, BUT I
HAVEN'T SEEN A
ONE LATELY."

もこ
MRGLE

もこ
MRGLE

ZH
ZH
ZH

THAT'S
ANOTHER
THEORY,
ANYWAY.

WINGE

?!
!!

PA-
POOF

PA-
POOF

PA-
POOF

THERE MAY
BE SURVIVORS
SOMEWHERE OUT
THERE, BUT I
SUSPECT THEIR
LIFE FORCES
HAVE GOTTEN
VERY WEAK, AND
THEY'VE BEEN
LIVING A QUIET
LIFE IN HIDING.

OR...

THAT'S
WHAT
MR. FOX
SPIRIT WAS
SAYING,
APPAR-
ENTLY.



AND NOW THAT THEY'VE BEEN EXPLAINED SCIENTIFICALLY, THEY'VE DISAPPEARED, RIGHT?

OH, I GET IT. KAMA-ITACHI WERE IMAGINARY MONSTERS, TOO, WEREN'T THEY?

KAMA-
ITACHI
WERE
IMAGINARY
MONSTERS,
TOO,
WEREN'T
THEY?

THE
SO-
CALLED
KAMA-
ITACHI
PHENOM-
ENON.

は、
SLICE



BUT
THE YŌKAI
IN QUESTION
ORIGINATED SO
LONG AGO THAT
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE
TO CONFIRM IF
THEY WERE BORN
FROM PEOPLE'S
IMAGINATIONS
OR NOT.

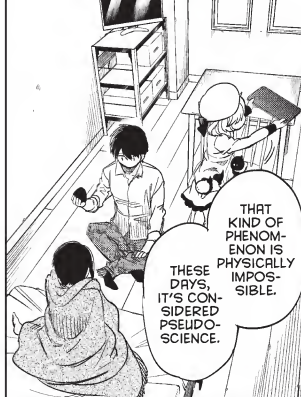
OH,
KAMA-
ITACHI
WERE REAL.

BUT SAKI-SAN.

AND THEIR PRESENCES WERE FELT MORE STRONGLY BECAUSE OF THE HUMAN IMAGINATION.

THERE ARE CASES WHERE A YOKAI EXISTED REGARDLESS OF HUMAN MINDS, BUT THEN THEY WERE GIVEN NAMES,

AND
THEIR
PRESENCES
WERE FELT
MORE
STRONGLY
BECAUSE OF
THE HUMAN
IMAGINA-
TION.



THESE DAYS,
IT'S CONSIDERED
PSEUDO-SCIENCE.

THAT KIND OF
PHENOMENON IS
PHYSICALLY
IMPOSSIBLE.



THAT
EXPLANATION
ABOUT A
VACUUM
CUTTING
YOUR SKIN
IS FAKE.

FAKE?



BUT PEOPLE
WERE ALREADY
STARTING TO
QUESTION IT BY
THE BEGINNING
OF THE SHOWA
ERA**.

APPARENTLY,
THE VACUUM
THEORY
HAS BEEN
WIDESPREAD
KNOWLEDGE
SINCE THE
MEIJI ERA*.

**1926-1989

*1868-1912



AND
THERE ARE
ABSOLUTELY
NO KNOWN
EXAMPLES OF THIS
PHENOMENON
DAMAGING ANY-
THING *OTHER*
THAN HUMAN
SKIN.

IT'S NOT
VERY EASY
FOR A
VACUUM TO
OCCUR IN
NATURE.

EVEN
IF ONE
DID, IT
WOULDN'T
BE STRONG
ENOUGH TO
CUT HUMAN
SKIN.

HOP
フ
ッ



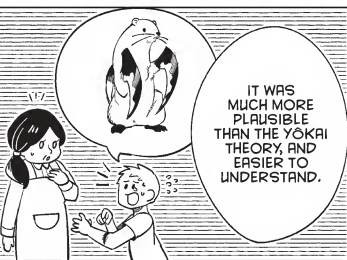
THE
FICTION
WAS MADE
REALITY.



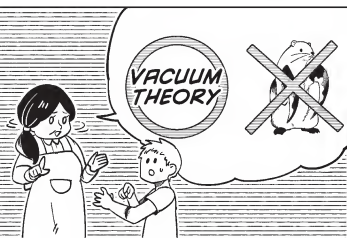
BUT I'M
SURE I
READ IT IN
A BOOK
OR SOME-
THING...

Hmm...

EXPERTS
HAVE
CONCLUDED
THAT IT'S
SCIENTIFI-
CALLY
IMPOSSIBLE.



IT WAS
MUCH MORE
PLAUSIBLE
THAN THE YŌKAI
THEORY, AND
EASIER TO
UNDERSTAND.



VACUUM
THEORY



THERE WAS NO
DEFINITE PROOF,
BUT EVERYONE
BELIEVED IT WAS
TRUE, SO IT BECAME
THE NUMBER ONE
EXPLANATION.

IT CAN
STILL ERASE
THE YŌKAI,
EVEN IF IT'S
A LIE.

We're going
back to the
mountains!

Yeah,
Kamaitachi
can't be
real!

THE VACUUM
THEORY MAY BE
FALSE, BUT IF THE
STORY IS BETTER
THAN ONE ABOUT
SICKLE WEASELS...

WHA?

Mm-hm

Mm-hm

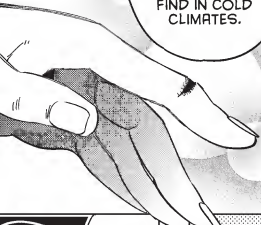
Okay.

SO IF A LIE
BECOMES
TRUTH, THAT
NEW TRUTH
CAN BE
SHAKEN BY
ANOTHER LIE,

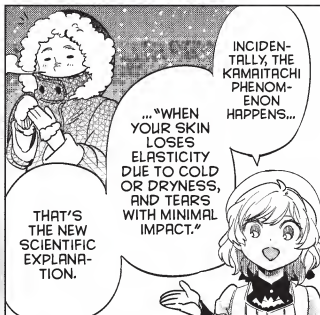
AND
CAN GO
BACK TO
BEING
A LIE.

...TO
MONSTERCIDE
BY FICTION,
WITHOUT EVEN
REALIZING IT?

SO...BY
BELIEVING
THE LIE, I WAS
CONTRIBUT-
ING...



THAT
SOLVES THE
MYSTERY OF THE
PAINLESS CUTS
THAT PEOPLE
FREQUENTLY
FIND IN COLD
CLIMATES.





I THINK
IT COULD
BE, IF YOU
LOOK AT
IT FROM
THE RIGHT
ANGLE.



DO
YOU THINK
ANYONE
WOULD BE
INTERESTED
TO KNOW THAT
THE TRUTH
BEHIND THE
PHENOMENON
IS CHAPPED
SKIN?

IT SOUNDS
REALLY COOL
TO THINK THAT
KAMAITACHI ARE
VACUUM BLADES
CAUSED BY
WHIRLWINDS, SO
THE CONCEPT
IS VERY
APPEALING.



ER...
HRRM.



NOW
THEN...

BACK TO
STEEL LADY
NANASE.



BUT THAT
DOESN'T
EXACTLY
MAKE IT
THE KIND
OF STORY
PEOPLE WILL
EAT UP.



ANYWAY,
THE
KAMAITACHI
YŌKAI
REALLY
DID
EXIST.

WHICH
MEANS THIS
THEORY
COULD BE
FAKE, TOO.

PEOPLE HAVE THOSE HOPES AND FEARS, AND IT'S NOT POSSIBLE TO DESTROY THEM.

LIFE IS MORE INTERESTING IF THERE IS SUCH A THING. IT'S MORE MAGICAL THAT WAY. IT WOULDN'T BE TOO STRANGE IF THERE WERE SUCH A THING.

NOBODY WANTS AN EXPLANATION THAT GOES, "THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS STEEL LADY NANASE BECAUSE THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS GHOSTS."

NA-NA-SE!

BECAUSE LIFE'S MORE INTERESTING THAT WAY.

AND ON THE INTERNET, WE WOULD ACTUALLY SEE MORE PEOPLE POSTING ABOUT THEIR DESIRE TO SEE HER.

STEEL LADY NANASE REALLY DOES EXIST, BUT SHE'S NO MORE THAN AN IMAGINARY MONSTER. IF PEOPLE WOULD STOP FANTASIZING ABOUT HER, SHE'D DISAPPEAR.

BUT THAT TRUTH WOULD ALSO BE DISMISSED.

BUT, LIKE THE VACUUM KAMAITACHI THEORY,

IF WE PROVIDE A STORY OR SOLUTION THAT—WHILE POSSIBLY FALSE—IS STILL MORE APPEALING THAN A REAL SPECTRE, PEOPLE WILL GRAVITATE TOWARD THAT.

POP
10
→

STEEL LADY
NANASE



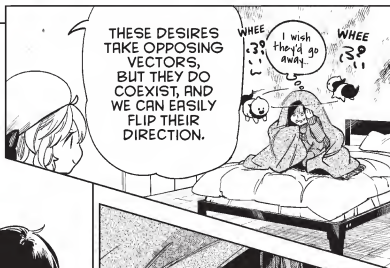


WHILE PEOPLE DO BELIEVE THAT GHOSTS EXIST, THEY ALSO HOPE THAT DREADFUL CREATURES WON'T BE A PART OF THEIR EVERYDAY LIFE.



YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE WITH THESE SPECTRES, AND YOU WANT TO EXPLAIN TO PEOPLE THAT A REAL ONE DOESN'T EXIST?

THAT'S FRAUD IF I EVER HEARD IT.



THESE DESIRES TAKE OPPOSING VECTORS, BUT THEY DO COEXIST, AND WE CAN EASILY FLIP THEIR DIRECTION.



I ADMIT THAT IT MAKES SENSE... BUT...



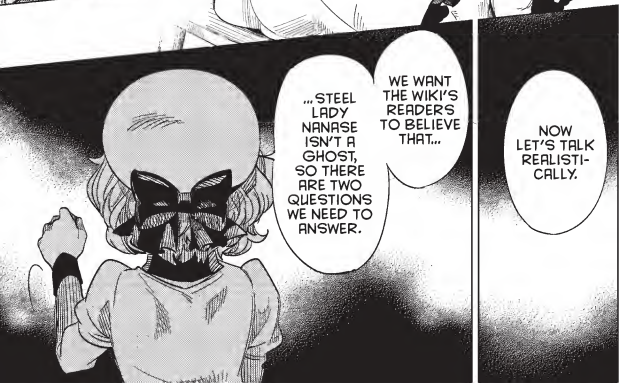
BUT
THERE IS
NO OTHER
WAY TO
EXTERMINATE
THAT
CREATURE.



==
NOD
==

YES, IT IS
FRAUD.

IT'S
ALL A
HOAX.



...STEEL
LADY
NANASE
ISN'T A
GHOST,
SO THERE
ARE TWO
QUESTIONS
WE NEED TO
ANSWER.

WE WANT
THE WIKI'S
READERS
TO BELIEVE
THAT...

NOW
LET'S TALK
REALISTI-
CALLY.

WHY
WOULD THEY
BE CAUSING
THESE
INCIDENTS?

SO...

Motive

QUES-
TION
TWO:

THERE ARE
REAL INCIDENTS
OF ATTEMPTED
ASSAULT,
FREQUENTLY
OCCURRING IN
MAKURAZAKA.
WHO IS CAUSING
THEM?

QUES-
TION
ONE:

Perp

...IF WE CAN
PRESENT AN
APPEALING
ANSWER THAT
REALISTICALLY
EXPLAINS BOTH
OF THESE
POINTS...



**STEEL LADY
NANASE WILL
BE BOUND BY
A RATIONAL
FICTION.**





... SOMEONE
MIGHT SHOW
UP LATER AND
POINT OUT
SOME MISTAKE,
AND OUR
THEORY WOULD
LOSE ITS
CREDIBILITY.

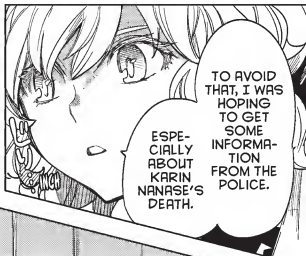
IF WE
WERE TO
RELY ON THE
INFORMATION
ON THE
INTERNET TO
INVENT OUR
PHONY
SOLUTION...

AND TO
DO THAT,
WE NEED
ACCURATE
INFORMA-
TION.

がし
CREAK



YOU
...



ESPE-
CIALLY
ABOUT
KARIN
NANASE'S
DEATH.

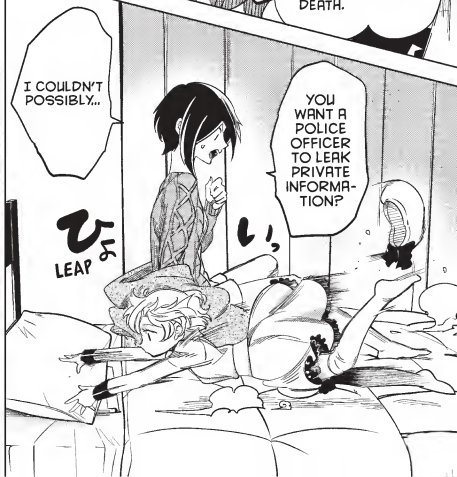
TO AVOID
THAT, I WAS
HOPING
TO GET
SOME
INFORMA-
TION
FROM THE
POLICE.



I COULDN'T
POSSIBLY...

ひ
LEAP

YOU
WANT A
POLICE
OFFICER
TO LEAK
PRIVATE
INFORMA-
TION?





...BUT I SEE YOU ALREADY HAVE THE FILE ON KARIN NANASE.

SMIRK

SFF!

MY, MY...

I WAS AFRAID WE'D RUN INTO TROUBLE IF THE CASE HAPPENED TO BE OUTSIDE YOUR JURISDICTION...

Haruko Nanase Case File

KURÔ-KUN!

HOP

A A A H!

GIVE THAT B...

!!!

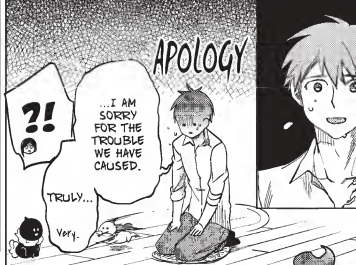
I-L-E there

TERRA-SHA why did you label it so obviously?

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS GIRL?!

MARGE

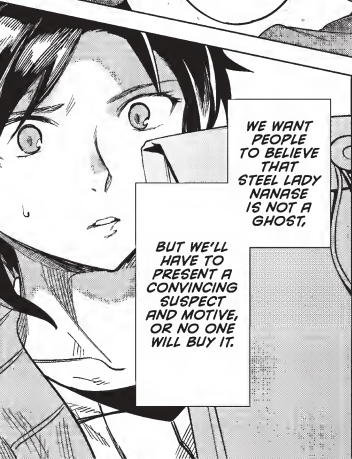
はし、PASH





**TO
DEFEAT
STEEL
LADY
NANASE.**

**AND TO
DO THAT,
WE NEED
THIS FILE.**

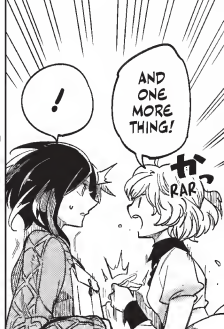


**WE WANT
PEOPLE
TO BELIEVE
THAT
STEEL LADY
NANASE
IS NOT A
GHOST,**

**BUT WE'LL
HAVE TO
PRESENT A
CONVINCING
SUSPECT
AND MOTIVE,
OR NO ONE
WILL BUY IT.**



**PEOPLE ARE
ALREADY
SWEARING
ALL OVER
THE
INTERNET
THAT
THEY'VE
BEEN
ATTACKED
BY THE
STEEL LADY.**



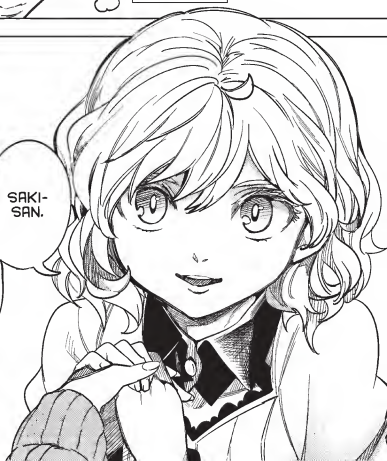
WHO WOULD EVER COME UP WITH SUCH AN IMPOSSIBLE PLAN?

SHE ACTUALLY WANTS TO INVENT A PLAUSIBLE LIE...



CAN I COUNT ON YOUR HELP?

SAKI-SAN.

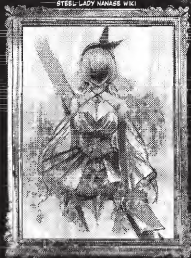


IN/SPECTRE

YŌKAI:
MAKURAGAESHI,
THE PILLOW
FLIPPER







24

KZH
=||
/ ZH
m
+

三

ABOUT STEEL LADY NANASE

揭示板

FORUMS

<402> Name: Withheld by Request 09/03 23:57 ID:km j9n
I just got attacked by Steel Lady Nanase
at the park in Higashi-Makurazaka!



44027 Name: withheld by request 09/09 23:57 10.0km jpn
I just got attacked by Steel Lady Nanase
at the park in Higashi-Makurazaka!

TAK

TAK 

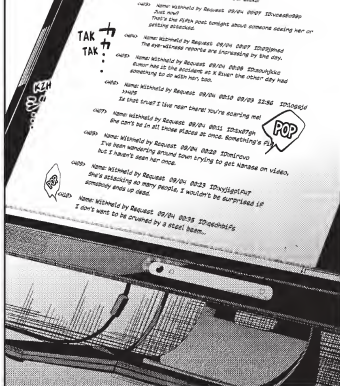
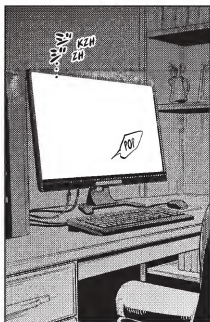
<403> Name: Withheld by Request 09/04 00:07 ID:vcesbo
Just now?

That's the fifth post tonight about someone seeing her or getting attacked.

<404> Name: Withheld by Request 09/04 00:07 ID:09jphs
The eye-witness reports are increasing by the day

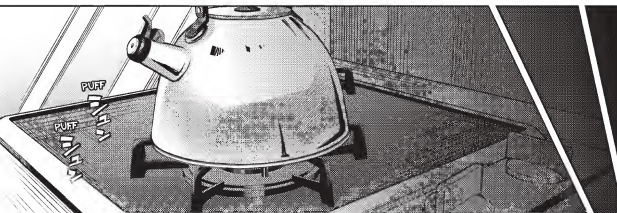
POP

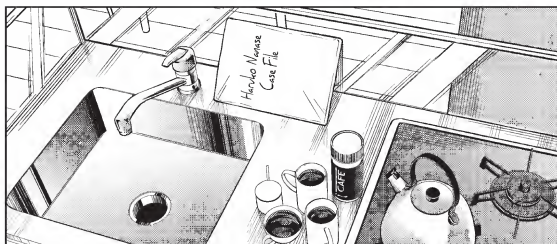
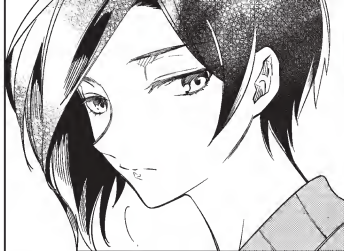
TAK
力

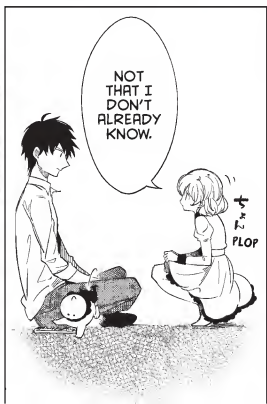
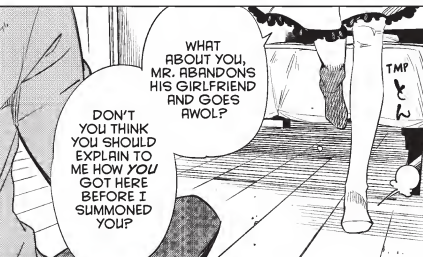


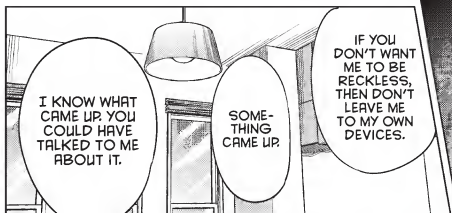
<410> Name: Withheld by Request 09/04 00:35 ID:qsdhbfbs
I don't want to be crushed by a steel beam...

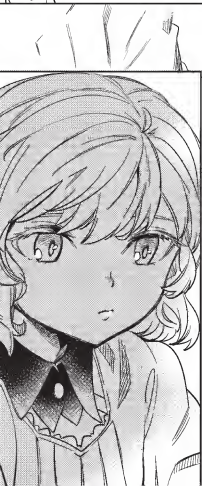
<411> Name: Withheld by Request 09/04 00:38 ID:9pplkouk974j
I don't want to be crushed, but I would like to meet
Steel Lady Nanase. The ghost of a beautiful pop star
with a big rack? Yes, please!













IF YOU PREFER, WE CAN GO FIND A CORNER TO DO THE NASTY.

CLAMP!

カ
ッ
ッ



SAVE YOUR DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION FOR WHEN YOU'RE NOT IN THE MIDDLE OF SOMEONE ELSE'S APARTMENT.



Sigh...

I'M ALWAYS ASKING MYSELF THE SAME QUESTION. BUT SHE DOES COME FROM A WELL-TO-DO FAMILY.
HER PARENTS ARE VERY RESPECTABLE.



Do the...

...! KURO-KUN.



HOW CAN THIS GIRL LOOK SO MUCH LIKE A REFINED LADY BUT SAY SUCH VULGAR THINGS?



SETTING
THIS
POINTLESS
DISCUSSION
ASIDE...

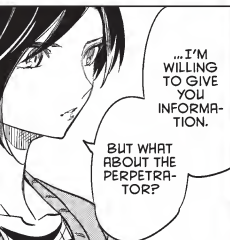


Hmmm...



WHAT
DO THESE
PEOPLE
THINK A
REFINED
LADY IS?

They're over-
idealizing



...I'M
WILLING
TO GIVE
YOU
INFORMATION.

BUT WHAT
ABOUT THE
PERPETRA-
TOR?



GNN

TO NASE



AND
I DON'T
FEEL
GOOD
ABOUT
SETTING
UP A REAL
PERSON TO
TAKE THE
FALL.

IT DOESN'T
MATTER HOW
REALISTIC OUR
SOLUTION IS—
IT'S GOING
TO BE FAKE.
THERE WON'T
BE ANYONE TO
ARREST.

WHAA

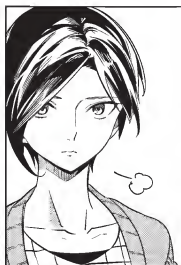
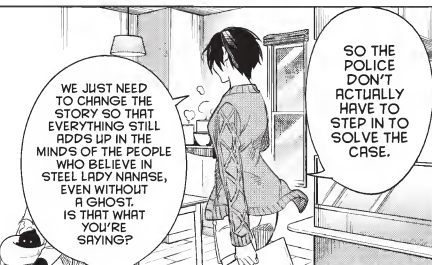
AAT?!

THE REAL
"GHOST" IS
THIS EMPLOYEE
AT THE HOTEL
WHERE KARIN
NANASE WAS
STAYING!



SAKI-SAN,
MAY WE HAVE
YOUR COOP-
ERATION?







AS LONG
AS IT'S
SOMETHING
THAT A LOT
OF PEOPLE
WOULD LIKE
TO BE
TRUE,

THEN IT
SHOULDN'T
MATTER
IF THERE
ARE A FEW
STRETCHES IN
LOGIC, OR IF
WE TAKE SOME
ARTISTIC
LICENSE.



COMPARED
TO CREATING A
FAKE SOLUTION
THAT WOULD
WITHSTAND POLICE
INVESTIGATION
AND A TRIAL, THIS
SHOULD ACTUALLY
BE PRETTY
EASY.



THAT'S
GOING
TO BE
TOUGH.



WELL, I
CAN'T TELL
YOU EVERY-
THING, BUT
I'LL TELL
YOU AS MUCH
AS I CAN.



YOU'D SAVE
YOURSELF
A LOT OF
TROUBLE IF YOU
WOULD JUST
LET ME LOOK
AT THE FILE.

I
CAN'T
DO
THAT.

SPARKLE
✦
✦
✦

LET'S
START BY
REVIEWING
THE BASIC
POINTS, AND
SORTING OUT
THE POINTS
THAT MIGHT
RAISE
QUESTIONS.

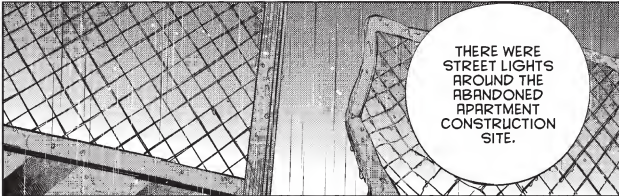


KARIN
NANASE WAS
HOUNDED BY
THE MEDIA OVER
ACCUSATIONS
OF PATRICIDE,
AND WAS
HIDING OUT IN
MAKURAZAKA.

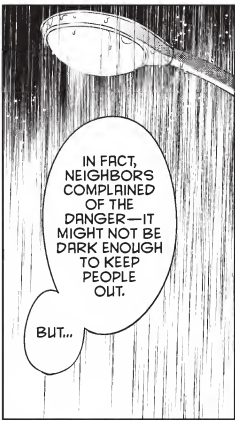
HER BODY
WAS FOUND
AFTER EIGHT
A.M. ON THE
NIGHT OF
JANUARY
30TH.



THE
INVESTIGATORS'
FIRST QUESTION
WAS WHAT WAS
KARIN NANASE
DOING THERE TO
BEGIN WITH?



THERE WERE
STREET LIGHTS
AROUND THE
ABANDONED
APARTMENT
CONSTRUCTION
SITE.



IN FACT,
NEIGHBORS
COMPLAINED
OF THE
DANGER—IT
MIGHT NOT BE
DARK ENOUGH
TO KEEP
PEOPLE
OUT.

BUT...



SO THERE
WAS SOME
DEGREE OF
VISIBILITY AT
NIGHT, EVEN WITH
ALL THE WALLS
AND FENCES
AROUND IT.



IT WAS UNUSUAL THAT SHE WOULD BE OUT AT THAT HOUR, AND ESPECIALLY IN THAT WEATHER.



LOOKING AT THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE ONLY THING THAT MAKES SENSE IS THAT SOMEONE CALLED HER OUT THERE.

SO WOULDN'T MURDER BE THEIR FIRST GUESS?



IT'S NOT EXACTLY THE KIND OF PLACE YOU WOULD EXPECT A 19-YEAR-OLD GIRL TO WANDER INTO.

FURTHERMORE, THE DAY BEFORE HER BODY WAS FOUND—THE 29TH—IT HAD STARTED DRIZZLING SOME TIME AFTER NINE P.M.

AFTER MIDNIGHT, THE DRIZZLE TURNED INTO RAINFALL, AND THERE WAS ALMOST NO ONE IN THE AREA.



ACCORDING
TO THE PRESS
REPORTS, THEY
FOUND A BOX
OF CIGARETTES
NEAR KARIN
NANASE'S
BODY.

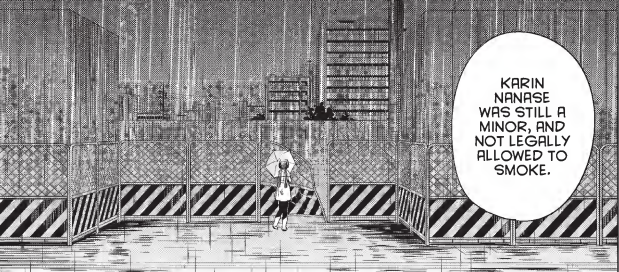


NEXT TO THE
BODY, THEY
FOUND THE
UMBRELLA SHE
MUST HAVE
USED,

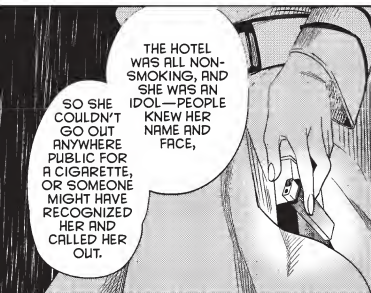
AND FIVE
CIGARETTE
BUTTS.

YES,
THOSE
REPORTS
WERE
TRUE.

THERE
WAS ALSO A
LIGHTER AND
AN OPEN BOX
OF CIGARETTES
IN HER COAT
POCKET.



KARIN
NANASE
WAS STILL A
MINOR, AND
NOT LEGALLY
ALLOWED TO
SMOKE.



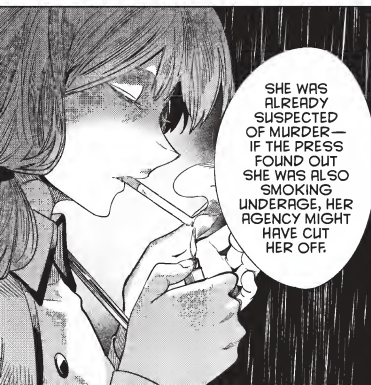
SO SHE
COULDN'T
GO OUT
ANYWHERE
PUBLIC FOR
A CIGARETTE,
OR SOMEONE
MIGHT HAVE
RECOGNIZED
HER AND
CALLED HER
OUT.

THE HOTEL
WAS ALL NON-
SMOKING, AND
SHE WAS AN
IDOL—PEOPLE
KNEW HER
NAME AND
FACE,



BASED
ON THAT, THE
POLICE DEDUCED
THAT SHE HAD
GONE TO THE
CONSTRUCTION
SITE SO SHE
COULD
SMOKE...

...WITHOUT
ANYONE
SEEING
HER.



SHE WAS
ALREADY
SUSPECTED
OF MURDER—
IF THE PRESS
FOUND OUT
SHE WAS ALSO
SMOKING
UNDERAGE, HER
AGENCY MIGHT
HAVE CUT
HER OFF.



SO THAT
CONSTRUCTION
SITE, SURROUNDED
BY WALLS, WAS
PROBABLY THE
BEST PLACE
FOR HER.

AND IN THE
MIDDLE OF A
RAINY NIGHT,
THERE WOULD
BE EVEN FEWER
PEOPLE AROUND,
AND THE SMOKE
WOULDN'T BE
AS VISIBLE.



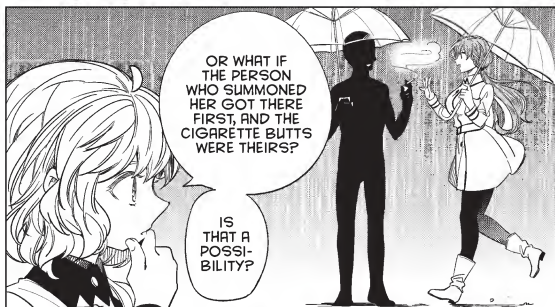
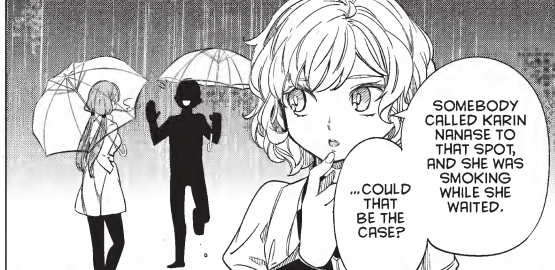
YES,
BUT...

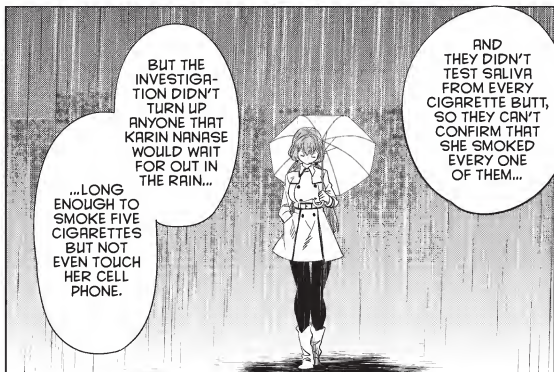
KARIN
NANASE'S
AGENCY
DENIED THAT
SHE WAS A
SMOKER.



AND THE
AUTOPSY
REPORT
CONFIRMED
THAT SHE
WAS A
HABITUAL
SMOKER.

...THEY
FOUND
TWO MORE
BOXES OF
CIGARETTES
AMONG HER
PERSONAL
EFFECTS IN
HER ROOM
AT THE
HOTEL.





BUT THE INVESTIGATION DIDN'T TURN UP ANYONE THAT KARIN NANASE WOULD WAIT FOR OUT IN THE RAIN...

...LONG ENOUGH TO SMOKE FIVE CIGARETTES BUT NOT EVEN TOUCH HER CELL PHONE.

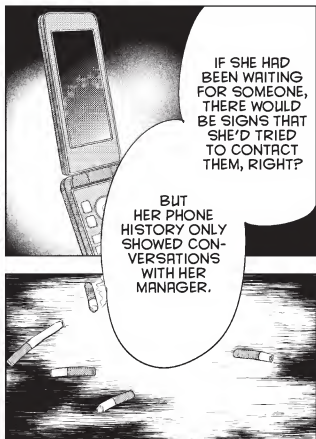
AND THEY DIDN'T TEST SALIVA FROM EVERY CIGARETTE BUTT, SO THEY CAN'T CONFIRM THAT SHE SMOKED EVERY ONE OF THEM...



Call me if anything happens, okay?

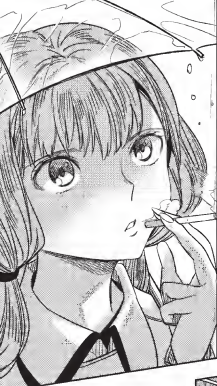
ONLY HER MANAGER KNEW WHERE SHE WAS HIDING.

AND SHE WAS CAREFUL. SHE FOUND A NEW HOTEL EVERY THREE TO FIVE DAYS.



IF SHE HAD BEEN WAITING FOR SOMEONE, THERE WOULD BE SIGNS THAT SHE'D TRIED TO CONTACT THEM, RIGHT?

BUT HER PHONE HISTORY ONLY SHOWED CONVERSATIONS WITH HER MANAGER.



SO WHILE THE POLICE DID LOOK AT HOMICIDE, THEY STARTED LEANING MORE HEAVILY TOWARD IT BEING AN ACCIDENT FAIRLY EARLY ON.

UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE THAT SHE WOULD CONTACT ANYONE SHE KNEW.

BUT IT'S ALSO TRUE THAT, IF THIS WERE ACCURATE, THERE ARE OTHER QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE ANSWERED.



AND IT'S SIMPLER AND MAKES MORE SENSE TO ASSUME THAT SHE WAS OUT SMOKING, THE BEAMS FELL ON HER, AND SHE DIED INSTANTLY.

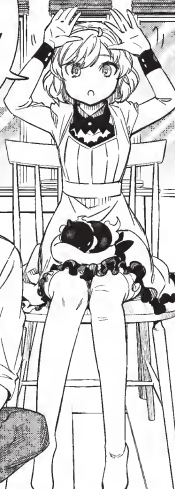
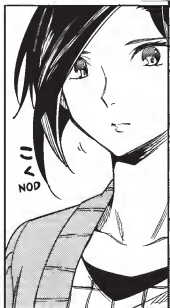
PEOPLE HAVE TESTIFIED THAT THE IRON BEAMS ALWAYS LOOKED UNSTABLE.

PAH / ✂

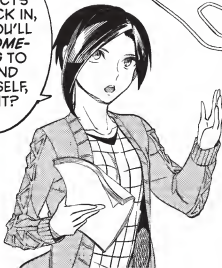
BUT THERE WERE NO SIGNS THAT SHE TRIED TO DUCK OUT OF THE WAY, OR FLUNG HER ARMS UP TO DEFEND HERSELF, CORRECT?

THOSE BEAMS HIT KARIN NANASE DIRECTLY IN THE FACE.

WHAT QUESTIONS?



YOUR INSTINCTS WILL KICK IN, AND YOU'LL DO *SOMETHING* TO DEFEND YOURSELF, RIGHT?



IT'D BE ONE THING IF THEY HAD FALLEN ON HER FROM BEHIND,

BUT WHEN YOU *SEE* SOMETHING COMING AT YOU, YOU'LL TWIST YOUR BODY OR RAISE YOUR ARMS, EVEN IF YOU KNOW IT WON'T HELP.

OH,
YEAH, I
GUESS
NOT.



BUT SHE
DIDN'T DO ANY
OF THAT—SHE
JUST LET THE
BEAM CRUSH
HER. YOU HAVE
TO ADMIT,
THAT'S NOT
NORMAL.



YES, IF YOU'D
BEEN THERE,
SENPAI, YOU
PROBABLY
WOULD HAVE
JUST LET THE
BEAM SMASH
YOU IN THE
FACE.

I WISH YOUR
SENSE OF
DANGER
WERE A LITTLE
STRONGER.



ACTS



THINKS

YES, BUT
IT'S STILL A
RATHER ODD
PROGRES-
SION.



doesn't
mean I
don't have
to be
careful



Just
because
it doesn't
hurt,



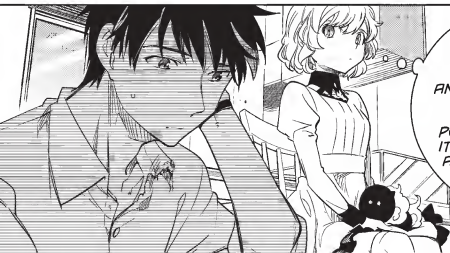
That's
a knife.

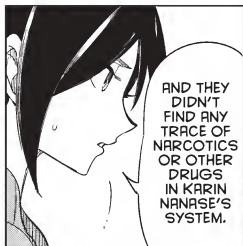
HEY, I'M
CAREFUL,
TECHNICALLY.



I MAY
NOT FEEL
PAIN, BUT
I DO HAVE
A SENSE
OF TOUCH.

I WONDER
IF THAT'S
ANOTHER EFFECT
OF GAINING
MONSTER
POWERS...OR IF
IT'S HIS HUMAN
ADAPTABILITY.

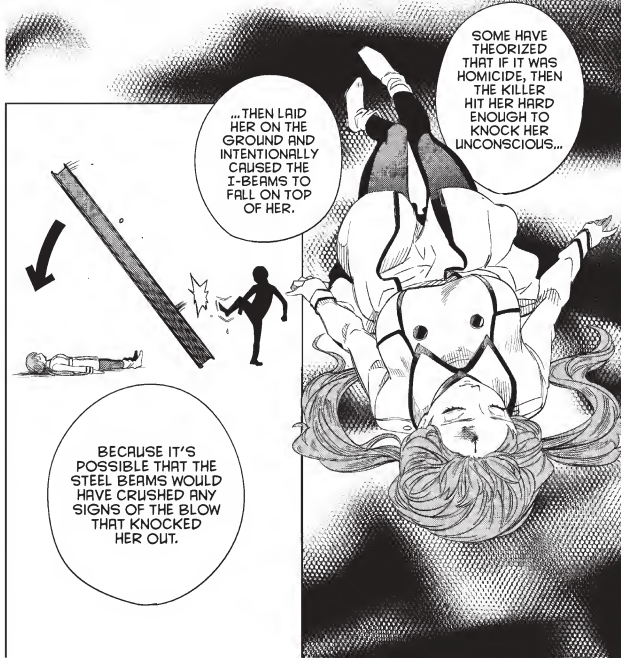




AND THEY DIDN'T FIND ANY TRACE OF NARCOTICS OR OTHER DRUGS IN KARIN NANASE'S SYSTEM.



THE LOOK ON HER FACE SAYS SHE KNOWS FROM EXPERIENCE.



...THEN LAID HER ON THE GROUND AND INTENTIONALLY CAUSED THE I-BEAMS TO FALL ON TOP OF HER.

SOME HAVE THEORIZED THAT IF IT WAS HOMICIDE, THEN THE KILLER HIT HER HARD ENOUGH TO KNOCK HER UNCONSCIOUS...

BECAUSE IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THE STEEL BEAMS WOULD HAVE CRUSHED ANY SIGNS OF THE BLOW THAT KNOCKED HER OUT.



SHE WAS UNDER A LOT OF STRESS, AND IN THAT SITUATION, SHE COULD HAVE BEEN PRONE TO SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR.

BUT THE MEDIA WASN'T GIVING HER ANY REST, AND PEOPLE SUSPECTED HER OF KILLING HER OWN FATHER.

THAT'S ENOUGH TO SEND SOMEBODY OUT IN THE RAIN FOR A CIGARETTE, RIGHT?

THAT *WOULD* BE THE NATURAL CONCLUSION.

EVEN IF SOMEONE DID INTENTIONALLY KNOCK THE BEAMS OVER, YOU CAN'T ASSUME THAT'S TRUE UNLESS THEY LEFT SOME EVIDENCE.

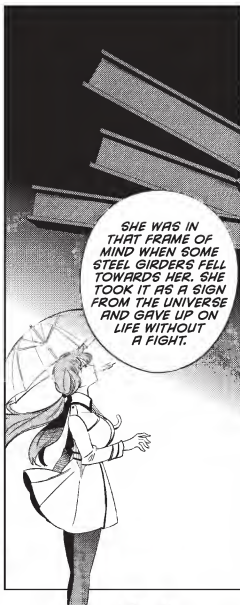
SO IF SOME STEEL BEAMS HAPPENED TO FALL ON HER, IT WOULDN'T BE SO STRANGE TO THINK THAT HER DEFENSIVE INSTINCTS JUST DIDN'T KICK IN, AND SHE WATCHED IN A DAZE AS THEY CAME DOWN.

THAT BECAME THE PREDOMINANT INTERPRETATION, SO PEOPLE HAVE REJECTED THE THEORY THAT SHE WAS UNCONSCIOUS BEFORE THE GIRDERS HIT.





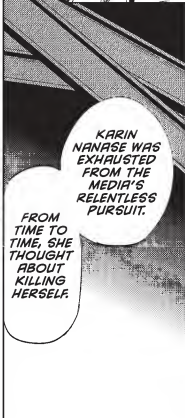
CAN WE
WORK
WITH THAT
INTERPRE-
TATION?



SHE WAS IN
THAT FRAME OF
MIND WHEN SOME
STEEL GIRDERS FELL
TOWARDS HER. SHE
TOOK IT AS A SIGN
FROM THE UNIVERSE
AND GAVE UP ON
LIFE WITHOUT
A FIGHT.

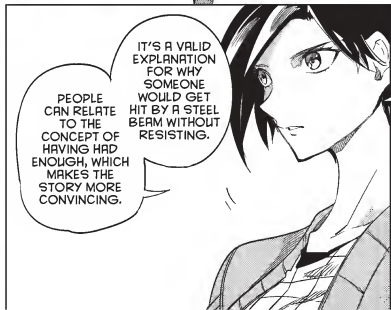


SO...



KARIN
NANASE WAS
EXHAUSTED
FROM THE
MEDIA'S
RELENTLESS
PURSUIT.

FROM
TIME TO
TIME, SHE
THOUGHT
ABOUT
KILLING
HERSELF.



PEOPLE
CAN RELATE
TO THE
CONCEPT OF
HAVING HAD
ENOUGH, WHICH
MAKES THE
STORY MORE
CONVINCING.

IT'S A VALID
EXPLANATION
FOR WHY
SOMEONE
WOULD GET
HIT BY A STEEL
BEAM WITHOUT
RESISTING.

OTHER
INVESTIGA-
TORS HAD
THE SAME
IDEA.





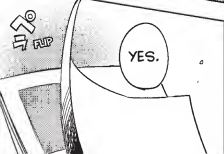
AND BASED
ON THE CIR-
CUMSTANCES,
PEOPLE HAVE
UNOFFICIALLY
CONCLUDED
THAT IT WAS
AN "ACCIDENT
BORDERING
ON SUICIDE."

IN THE END,
THE POLICE
OFFICIALLY
RULED KARIN
NANASE'S
DEATH AN
ACCIDENT.

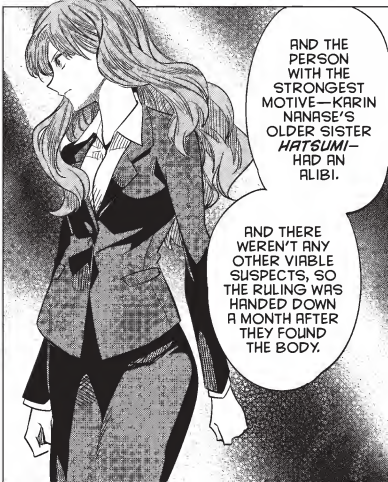


Huh?

HER OWN
SISTER
HAD A
MOTIVE?



YES.

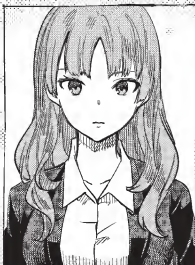


AND THE
PERSON
WITH THE
STRONGEST
MOTIVE—KARIN
NANASE'S
OLDER SISTER
HATSUMI—
HAD AN
ALIBI.

AND THERE
WEREN'T ANY
OTHER VIABLE
SUSPECTS, SO
THE RULING WAS
HANDLED DOWN
A MONTH AFTER
THEY FOUND
THE BODY.



HATSUMI
AND KARIN...
OR IN
THIS CASE,
MAYBE I
SHOULD
REFER TO
HER BY HER
REAL NAME,
HARUKO.



Hatsumi Nanase



THEY HAD
BEEN
ON BAD
TERMS
SINCE
THEY WERE
YOUNG.

IF KARIN
NANASE HAD
BEEN MURDERED,
THE NUMBER ONE
SUSPECT WAS
HER SISTER
HATSUMI.



I HAVE
REPORTERS
COMING TO MY
HOUSE BECAUSE
OF YOU.

YOU RUIN
EVERY-
THING.

HATSUMI
DIDN'T HELP
WHEN THE
MEDIA WAS
AFTER HER,
AND ACTUALLY
CAME DOWN
PRETTY HARD
ON HER.



DAD
IS DEAD,
HARUKO.



BUT...
HATSUMI...
WHAT
HAPPENED
TO DAD
WAS...



AND SO
IS MOM.
AND IT'S
ALL YOUR
FAULT!



AND IF KARIN
DIED, ALL OF
THE MONEY SHE
EARNED AS AN
IDOL WOULD
GO DIRECTLY
TO HER ONLY
LIVING RELATIVE,
HATSUMI.

ALSO,
HATSUMI
HAD BEEN
TELLING
PEOPLE
THAT HER
SISTER WAS
RESPONSIBLE
FOR THEIR
FATHER'S
DEATH.



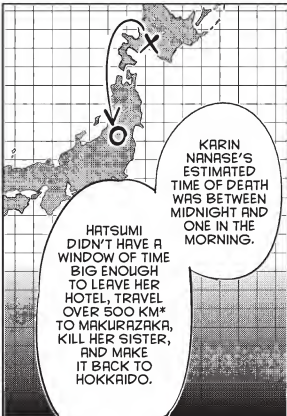
HATSUMI
WOULD HAVE
PROFITED
FROM HER
SISTER'S
DEATH,
EMOTIONALLY
AND
FINANCIALLY.



BUT THEY
RULED IT AN
ACCIDENT AFTER
ABOUT A MONTH.
DOES THAT MEAN
THE SISTER'S
ALIBI WAS
AIRTIGHT?



SO
YOU CAN
SEE WHY
SHE WAS
THE MOST
VIABLE
SUSPECT.



KARIN
NANASE'S
ESTIMATED
TIME OF DEATH
WAS BETWEEN
MIDNIGHT AND
ONE IN THE
MORNING.

HATSUMI
DIDN'T HAVE A
WINDOW OF TIME
BIG ENOUGH
TO LEAVE HER
HOTEL, TRAVEL
OVER 500 KM*
TO MAKURAZAKA,
KILL HER SISTER,
AND MAKE
IT BACK TO
HOKKAIDO.



SHE WAS
STAYING AT
THEIR HOTEL IN
HOKKAIDO
ON THE
NIGHT
OF THE
INCIDENT.

HATSUMI NANASE
HAD GONE TO
HOKKAIDO WITH
FIVE OF HER
COLLEGE FRIENDS,
INCLUDING HER
BOYFRIEND, TO
VISIT SOME HOT
SPRINGS
THERE.

*ABOUT 310 MI.



AS AN
ALIBI, IT
WORKS.

APPARENTLY,
HATSUMI HAD INVITED
HER FRIENDS ON
THAT TRIP AS AN
APOLOGY FOR ALL
THE TROUBLE THE
MEDIA HAD CAUSED
THEIR FAMILIES.

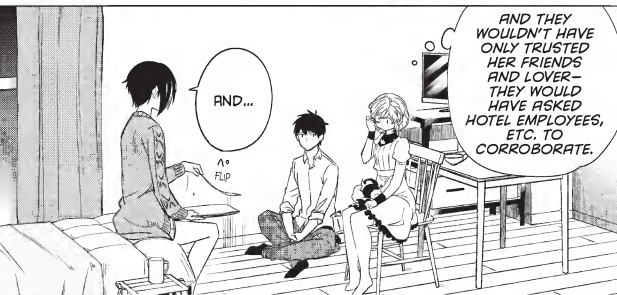
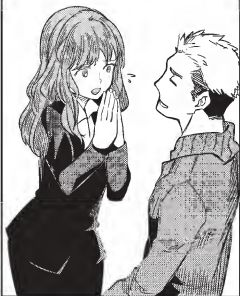


BUT THE
POLICE WOULD
HAVE INVESTI-
GATED EVERY
POSSIBLE MODE
OF TRANSPOR-
TATION.



I DON'T
THINK IT'S
A GOOD
IDEA TO
JUMP TO
CONCLU-
SIONS...

Hmm...



AND...

△
FLIP

AND THEY
WOULDN'T HAVE
ONLY TRUSTED
HER FRIENDS
AND LOVER—
THEY WOULD
HAVE ASKED
HOTEL EMPLOYEES,
ETC. TO
CORROBORATE.

DURING THE
INVESTIGATION,
SHE WAS THE
ONLY ONE...

...WHO
EXPRESSED
DOUBT THAT HER
SISTER WOULD
KILL HERSELF
OR WOULD HAVE
BEEN IN A MENTAL
STATE WHERE
SHE WOULD
CONSIDER IT.

SHE
ADAMANTLY
REFUSED TO
BELIEVE IT.

THE
BIGGEST
QUESTION
SURROUNDING
KARIN NANASE'S
DEATH IS
HATSUMI
NANASE
HERSELF.

OH.

I DID
READ
SOME
COMMENTS
TO THAT
EFFECT
IN THE
TABLOIDS.





SHE WASN'T
THE KIND OF
PERSON TO
BUCKLE UNDER
PRESSURE, AND
SHE HAD A LOT
OF CONFIDENCE
IN HER LOOKS.

HARUKO
WOULD
NEVER KILL
HERSELF.



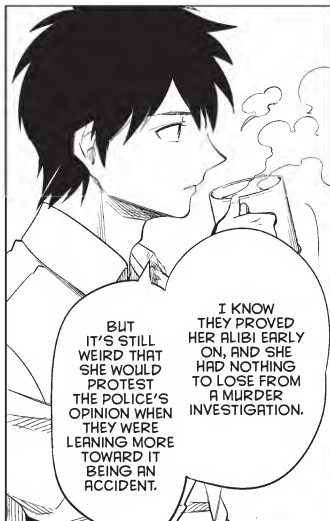
ARE YOU
SURE THERE'S
NO CHANCE
THAT SOME-
BODY KILLED
HER?!



CATER
++
9
SHE WOULD
NOT LET HERSELF
GET SMASHED
IN THE FACE BY
CONSTRUCTION
EQUIPMENT! THAT'S
MUCH TOO UGLY
A DEATH FOR
HER!



BAM
w



BUT
IT'S STILL
WEIRD THAT
SHE WOULD
PROTEST
THE POLICE'S
OPINION WHEN
THEY WERE
LEANING MORE
TOWARD IT
BEING AN
ACCIDENT.

I KNOW
THEY PROVED
HER ALIBI EARLY
ON, AND SHE
HAD NOTHING
TO LOSE FROM
A MURDER
INVESTIGATION.



...THAT'S THE
TESTIMONY
WE HAVE ON
RECORD.

SHE KEPT
ASKING THE IN-
VESTIGATORS
THE SAME
QUESTIONS,
EVEN AFTER
THEY RULED IT
AN ACCIDENT.



I UNDER-
STAND HER
NOT WANTING
TO BELIEVE
THAT HER
SISTER
HAD KILLED
HERSELF IF
THEY WERE
NORMAL
SISTERS.

BUT IF
SHE WAS A
SUSPECT,
THEN THAT
ALONE
WOULD MAKE
IT BETTER FOR
HER IF THEY
WRAPPED
EVERYTHING
UP QUICKLY.

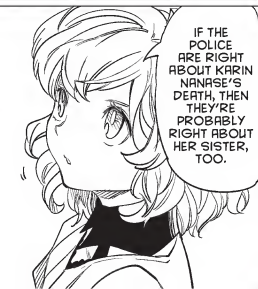
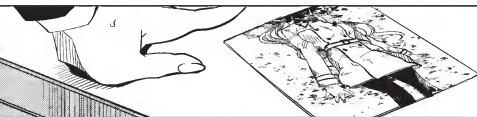


AFTER ALL, YOU
COULD SAY SHE
WAS ONE OF THE
REASONS THAT
KARIN WOULD
LOSE HER WILL
TO DODGE A
STEEL GIRDER.

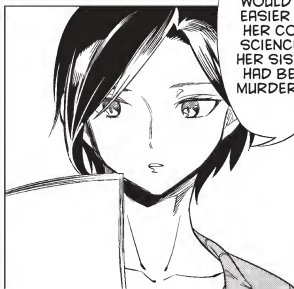
IT LOOKS
LIKE THEY DECIDED
THAT, NO MATTER HOW
MUCH SHE HATED HER
SISTER, SHE WOULD HAVE
FELT GUILTY ABOUT
WHAT HAPPENED, AND
WOULDN'T WANT TO
ACCEPT THAT IT COULD
HAVE BEEN SO CLOSE
TO SUICIDE.



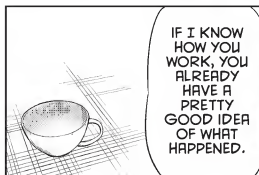
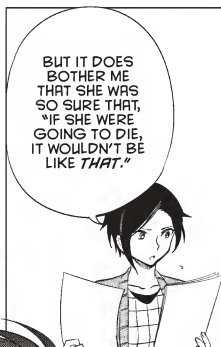
WHAT DID
THE POLICE
MAKE OF THE
SISTER'S
REACTION?



IF THE
POLICE
ARE RIGHT
ABOUT KARIN
NANASE'S
DEATH, THEN
THEY'RE
PROBABLY
RIGHT ABOUT
HER SISTER,
TOO.



AND
IN THAT
CASE, IT
WOULD BE
EASIER ON
HER CON-
SCIENCE IF
HER SISTER
HAD BEEN
MURDERED.

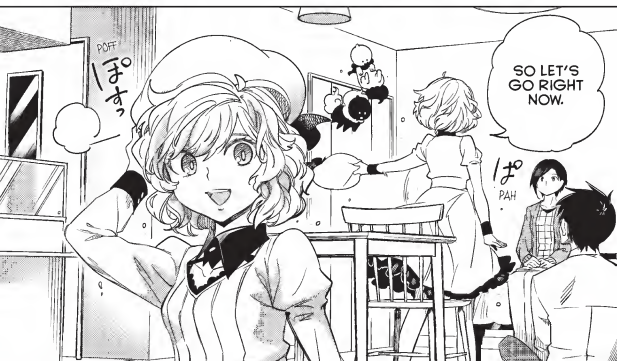


THERE WERE SO MANY PEOPLE AROUND DURING THE DAY, I COULDN'T MANAGE TO GET INTO THE CONSTRUCTION SITE.

BUT I DIDN'T UTILIZE THE USUAL METHODS THIS TIME.

...?

YOU DO KNOW HOW I WORK, SENPRAI.



SO LET'S GO RIGHT NOW.

TO FIND A WITNESS.

...GO WHERE?



IT'S BEEN
MORE THAN
HALF A YEAR
SINCE KARIN
NANASE
DIED!

WHY DID
YOU TAKE
ME HERE?!

PLEASE
GET OFF OF
ME, SAKI-SAN.
I CAN'T
MOVE.

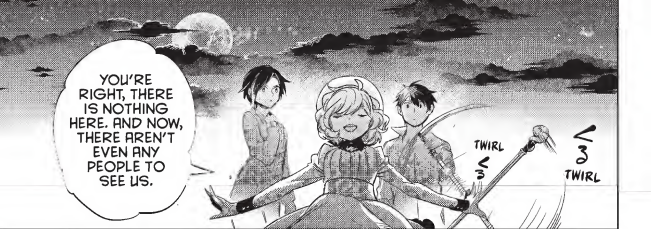


DU-
DUN

YOU'RE
NOT
GOING
TO FIND
ANYTHING
AT THE
SCENE
NOW!

POKE

CLACK



YOU'RE
RIGHT, THERE
IS NOTHING
HERE. AND NOW,
THERE AREN'T
EVEN ANY
PEOPLE TO
SEE US.

TWIRL

TWIRL



PLUS, IT'S
A TIME OF
NIGHT WHEN
IT'S EASIER
TO FIND NON-
PEOPLE OUT
AND ABOUT.



SCENES OF
DEATHS AND
MURDERS...

...HAVE A
NATURAL
TENDENCY...

...TO
ATTRACT
SUCH
THINGS!

SHA-
LOOM

...HM?

IT'S WHAT
LOOKS
COOLEST!

IT'S MY
SACRED
PRIESTESS
DANCE!!

PRIESTESSES
DRAW MAGIC
CIRCLES?

APPARENTLY,
SHE'S JUST
NOT HAPPY
UNTIL SHE
DOES THAT.

she'll legally
be an adult
soon, and
yet...

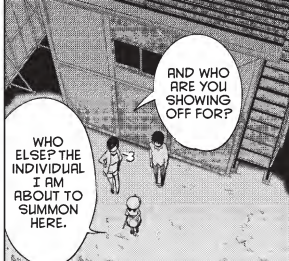


TO FIND A
WITNESS.



HUH...?

SUMMON...?



WHO
ELSE? THE
INDIVIDUAL
I AM
ABOUT TO
SUMMON
HERE.

AND WHO
ARE YOU
SHOWING
OFF FOR?



KEEP
IT
DOWN,
WOULD
YA?



WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING
OUT HERE
AT THIS
HOUR?

CHILL
!!

!!!



WELL,
WELL,
WELL.

WHA-
!!

WHA-
!!

WHA-
!!





THEN I
ASSUME
YOU KNOW
THAT THERE
WAS AN
ACCIDENT
HERE LATE
LAST
JANUARY.



A 19-
YEAR-OLD
YOUNG
WOMAN
PASSED
AWAY.



I WAS
WORKING
ON THE
CONSTRUC-
TION OVER
THERE, AND
SUDDENLY,
"WHOOOPS!"
I'M DEAD.

YES, I'VE
BEEN HERE
EVER SINCE
I DIED LAST
YEAR.

MY
CONDO-
LENCES.

Stabbed
by a piece
of debris.



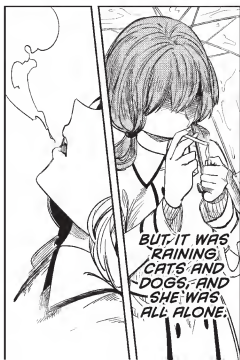
A YOUNG
WOMAN...

YOU
MEAN
KARIN
NANASE,
RIGHT?



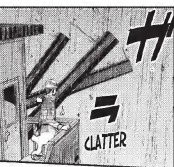
IF YOU
HAPPEN
TO KNOW
ANYTHING
ABOUT IT,
I WOULD
LOVE TO
HEAR IT.







AND
THEN...



CLATTER



ズ
ッ
ZHR



W...



SHE
LOOKED SO
SAD, AND
DEJECTED.



WATCH
OUT!!

FWP

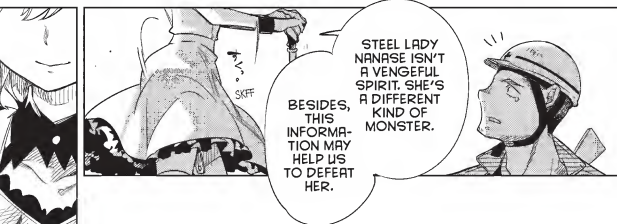
WHOOOOSH

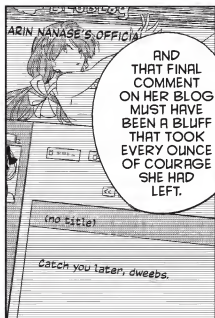
オ



**SHE DIDN'T
EVEN TRY
TO DODGE
THEM.**







AND
THAT FINAL
COMMENT
ON HER BLOG
MUST HAVE
BEEN A BLUFF
THAT TOOK
EVERY OUNCE
OF COURAGE
SHE HAD
LEFT.

KARIN
NANASE PUT
ON A BOLD
FRONT, BUT IN
REALITY, SHE
WAS A NORMAL
WOMAN WHOSE
FEELINGS GET
HURT JUST LIKE
EVERYBODY
ELSE.

AND
NOW WE
KNOW THE
FACTS.

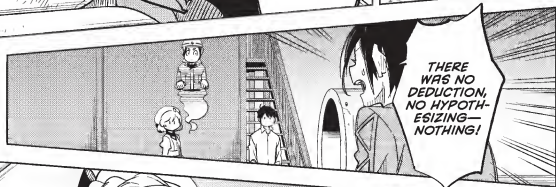


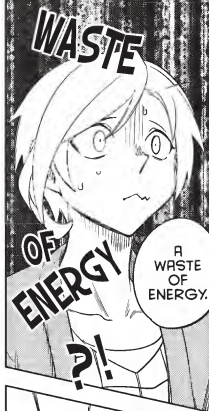
IT WAS
INDEED AN
ACCIDENTAL
DEATH
BORDERING
ON
SUICIDE.

JAPAN'S
POLICE DO
EXCELLENT
WORK.

YOU
SEEP?







A
WASTE
OF
ENERGY.

WRACKING
OUR BRAINS
TO FIND A
SOLUTION
IS JUST A
WASTE OF
ENERGY.

WHEN ALL IT
TAKES IS A
LITTLE INVES-
TIGATION,



YOU
KNOW THE
WHOLE
STORY, AND
ALL YOU HAD
TO DO WAS
ASK YOUR
SUPER-
NATURAL
FRIENDS!

THERE'S
NO
MYSTERY
TO KARIN
NANASE'S
DEATH!

THEN WHY
DID I HAVE
TO TELL YOU
WHAT IT SAID
IN THE POLICE
REPORTS?!



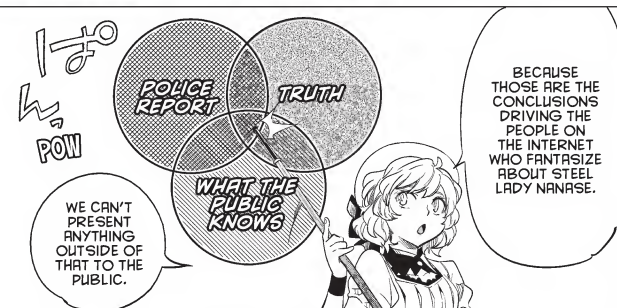


BUT
KNOWING
WHAT THE
PUBLIC SEES
AS TRUTH,
AND WHAT
CONCLUSIONS
CAN BE DRAWN
FROM THAT...

...IS
IMPORTANT,
TOO.

THE TRUTH IS
IMPORTANT.

CLUNK



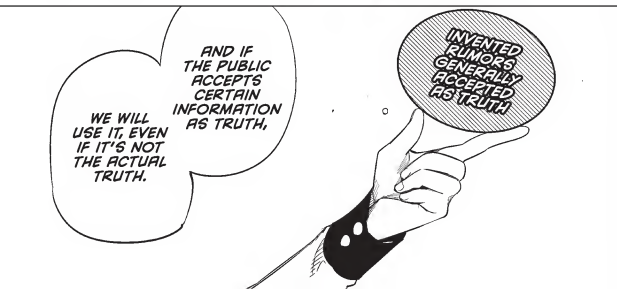
WE CAN'T
PRESENT
ANYTHING
OUTSIDE OF
THAT TO THE
PUBLIC.

POLICE
REPORT

TRUTH

WHAT THE
PUBLIC
KNOWS

BECAUSE
THOSE ARE THE
CONCLUSIONS
DRIVING THE
PEOPLE ON
THE INTERNET
WHO FANTASIZE
ABOUT STEEL
LADY NANASE.



WE WILL
USE IT, EVEN
IF IT'S NOT
THE ACTUAL
TRUTH.

AND IF
THE PUBLIC
ACCEPTS
CERTAIN
INFORMATION
AS TRUTH,

INVENTED
RUMORS
GENERALLY
ACCEPTED
AS TRUTH



I WILL USE
WHATEVER
I CAN TO
INVENT A
FICTION...

... AND
TO MAKE
THAT
FICTION
CONVINC-
ING.

I AM
A GODDESS
OF WISDOM.



I WILL MAKE
MYSELF
STRONGER,
SO THAT
WHEN THIS
BUILDING IS
FINISHED, I
CAN BE ITS
GUARDIAN
SPIRIT!

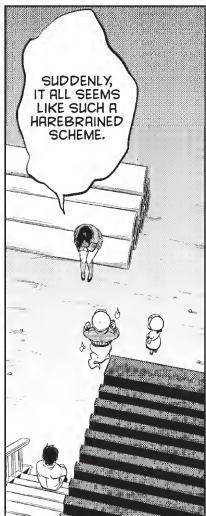
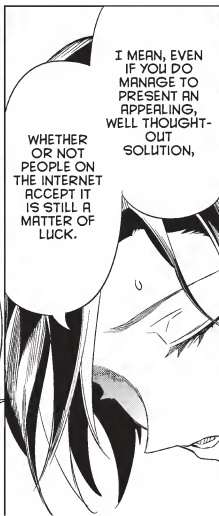
Y
E
A
H

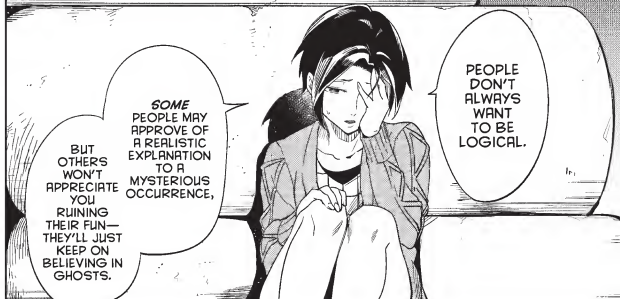


I KNEW I
COULD COUNT
ON YOU, MY
LADY! I WILL
LEARN FROM
YOUR EXAMPLE
AND USE THE
PAIN OF MY
FAILURE TO
PROPEL ME
FORWARD!

I'LL
NEVER
PASS ON
TO THE
AFTERLIFE IF
I REMAIN A
POWERLESS
HAUNT!

WAH

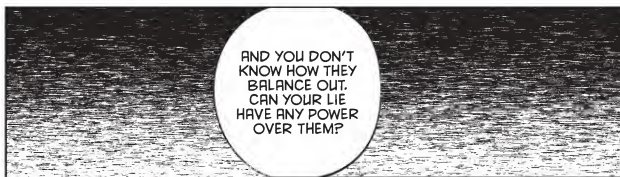




BUT OTHERS WON'T APPRECIATE YOU RUINING THEIR FUN—THEY'LL JUST KEEP ON BELIEVING IN GHOSTS.

SOME PEOPLE MAY APPROVE OF A REALISTIC EXPLANATION TO A MYSTERIOUS OCCURRENCE,

PEOPLE DON'T ALWAYS WANT TO BE LOGICAL.



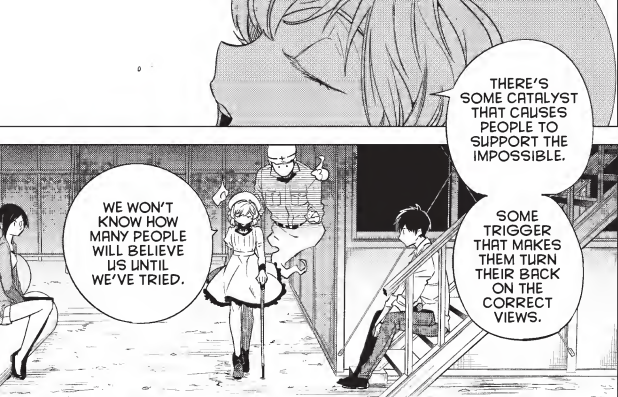
AND YOU DON'T KNOW HOW THEY BALANCE OUT. CAN YOUR LIE HAVE ANY POWER OVER THEM?



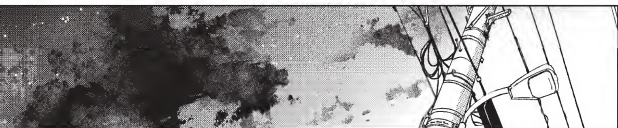
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE TO GET PEOPLE'S THOUGHT PROCESSES ALL TO FLOW IN ONE DIRECTION.



TURN THAT AROUND, AND THAT'S WHY IT'S NOT EASY FOR IMAGINARY MONSTERS TO COME INTO BEING.











SEN-
PAAAI!

KEEP IT
DOWN!

It's the middle
of the night!

RATTLE



RATTLE



THERE!
LET'S
STAY AT
THAT
HOTEL!

HOTEL: LOVELOVE MANOR



OOH,
SENPAI!

WHAT'S
WRONG
?!

Is it
School Lady
Nagasa?

... AND
QUES-
TIONED
HER
UNTIL
AFTER
2 A.M.

What
about
that?

Or
this?

THEY
RETURNED
TO HER
HOUSE...

IWA-
NAGA...

SAKI-SAN
GAVE US ALL
THE INFOR-
MATION WE
NEED TO
MEET THE
REQUIRE-
MENTS.

DO YOU
HAVE SOME
IDEA OF WHAT
"SOLUTION"
YOU'RE GOING
TO INVENT?

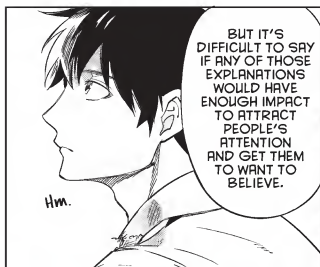


MAYBE THE COMPANY WITH THE RIGHTS TO HER PHOTO BOOK AND CD IS PULLING A PUBLICITY STUNT TO GET THEM TO TOP THE CHARTS AGAIN.

A PLEASURE CRIME, A HOAX TO ATTRACT THE MEDIA...

IF YOU PUT YOUR MIND TO IT, YOU COULD COME UP WITH ANY NUMBER OF MOTIVES.

"WHY WOULD SOMEONE DRESS LIKE STEEL LADY NANASE AND ATTACK PEOPLE NIGHT AFTER NIGHT?"



Hm.

BUT IT'S DIFFICULT TO SAY IF ANY OF THOSE EXPLANATIONS WOULD HAVE ENOUGH IMPACT TO ATTRACT PEOPLE'S ATTENTION AND GET THEM TO WANT TO BELIEVE.

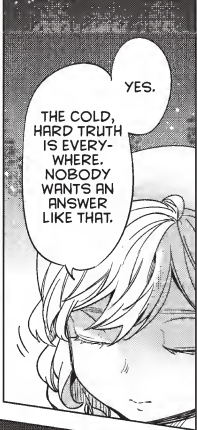
SO YOU WANT A TRUTH THAT'S NOT REALITY, BUT JUST A STORY.

IT MAY HAVE A STRONGER PULL IF WE CAN BELIEVABLY LINK IT TO PAST INCIDENTS AND POLISH IT UP INTO A REAL TEARJERKER.





**AND
ONCE WE
HAVE OUR
STORY, IT
WILL BE YOUR
TURN, KURŌ-
SENPŌ.**



**THE COLD,
HARD TRUTH
IS EVERY-
WHERE.
NOBODY
WANTS AN
ANSWER
LIKE THAT.**

YES.

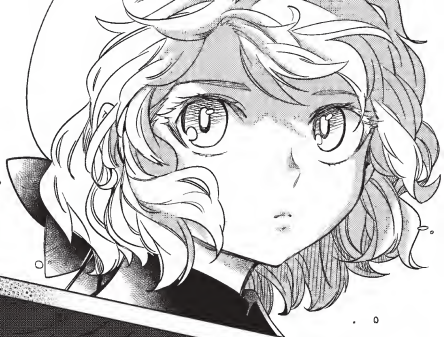


**FOR YOU,
I'LL DIE
AS MANY
TIMES AS
IT TAKES.**



YEAH.

**I'LL GO
GET YOU
A FUTURE
WHERE
PEOPLE
GET BEHIND
YOUR EXPLA-
NATION.**



THERE ISN'T
JUST ONE FUTURE
THAT'S SET IN
STONE.

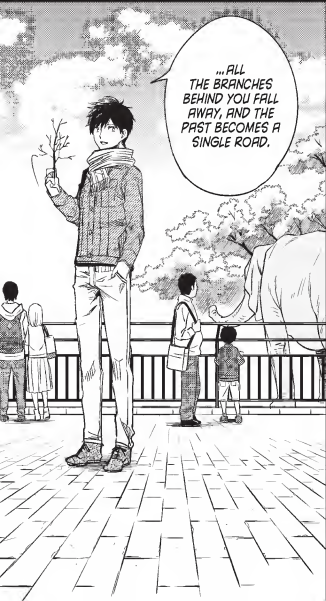


IF YOU LOOK
FORWARD FROM THIS
POINT IN TIME, THE FUTURE
BRANCHES OUT AND
CHANGES, CONSTANTLY
SPREADING OUT INTO
DIFFERENT PATHS.



THE ROAD
FORKS INFINITELY
FOR EVERY
POSSIBLE EVENT,
REACHING OUT LIKE
THE BRANCHES
OF A TREE.

SPLOOSH



...ALL
THE BRANCHES
BEHIND YOU FALL
AWAY, AND THE
PAST BECOMES A
SINGLE ROAD.

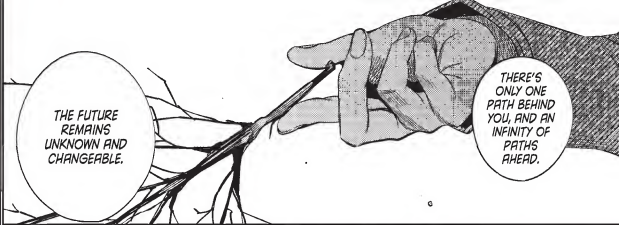


THERE'S A
PATH TO ANY
FUTURE YOU
COULD WANT.
EVERY FUTURE
IS POSSIBLE.

AND WHEN
YOU CHOOSE
A PATH AND
MOVE DOWN
IT...



YOINK
ふん



THE FUTURE
REMAINS
UNKNOWN AND
CHANGEABLE.

THERE'S
ONLY ONE
PATH BEHIND
YOU, AND AN
INFINITY OF
PATHS
AHEAD.



YOU WERE
DESTINED TO
BREAK UP WITH
SAKI-SAN.

THEN
RUNNING INTO
THAT KAPPA
WAS DESTINY,
TOO.

TOSS
IT



YOU HAVE AN
ANSWER FOR
EVERYONE,
DON'T YOU?



BUT BASED ON
THAT REASONING,
IT WOULD BE
IMPOSSIBLE TO
SEE THE FUTURE.



WELL
THEN.

THE FACT THAT
YOU MET ME IN
THE MIDST OF
THOSE INFINITE
FUTURES MEANS
IT MUST HAVE
BEEN DESTINY.



THE BEST
YOU CAN DO
IS SAY THAT
IT'S POSSIBLE,
RIGHT?

IF IT HAS
INFINITE BRANCHES,
THEN YOU CAN'T
CLAIM THAT IT'S
HEADED FOR ONE
DESTINATION.



...

HOW DO
YOU EXPLAIN
THAT CON-
TRADICTION?



BUT A
KUDAN TELLS
THE FUTURE
AND IS NEVER
WRONG.



WHEN
A KUDAN
PROPHESIES,
IT'S NOT JUST
TELLING WHAT
IT SAW.



THEIR
POWER
LETS THEM
DETERMINE
WHERE THE
FUTURE WILL
GO—

IT'S THE
POWER TO
DECIDE THE
FUTURE.

THE KUDAN
TAKES THOSE
INFINITE BRANCHES
OF THE FUTURE,
AND NARROWS
THEM INTO
ONE.



THAT'S THE
POWER OF
THE PROPHET
BEAST?



IT'S
SUCH...

...A FEAR-
SOME
POWER.

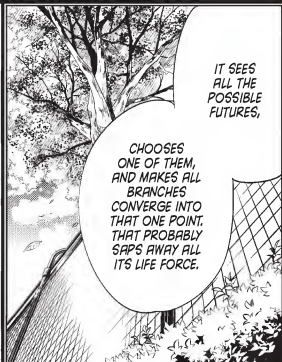


THE KUDAN
PAYS FOR USING
THAT POWER
WITH ITS LIFE.



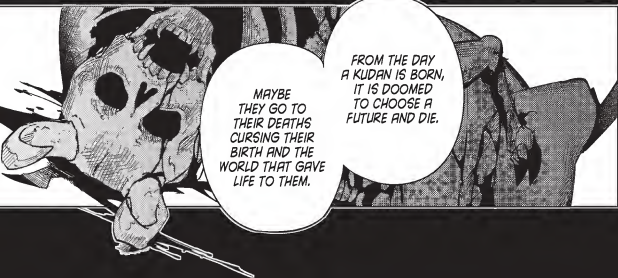
MAYBE
THAT'S
WHY...

... THE KUDAN
ALWAYS CHOOSE
SUCH OMINOUS
FUTURES.



IT SEES
ALL THE
POSSIBLE
FUTURES,

CHOOSES
ONE OF THEM,
AND MAKES ALL
BRANCHES
CONVERGE INTO
THAT ONE POINT.
THAT PROBABLY
SAPS AWAY ALL
ITS LIFE FORCE.



MAYBE
THEY GO TO
THEIR DEATHS
CURSING THEIR
BIRTH AND THE
WORLD THAT GAVE
LIFE TO THEM.

FROM THE DAY
A KUDAN IS BORN,
IT IS DOOMED
TO CHOOSE A
FUTURE AND DIE.



THERE ARE
RESTRICTIONS?



TROT
TROT

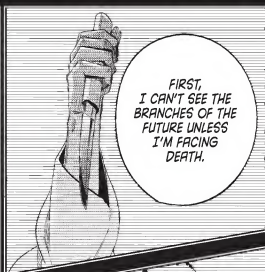


BUT IT'S
NOT LIKE I
CAN PICK ANY
FUTURE.

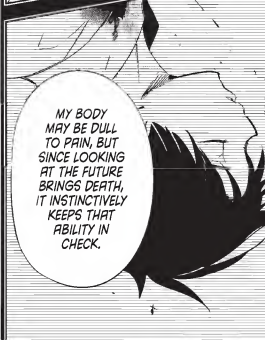
AND I
CAN'T USE
THE POWER
WHENEVER I
WANT TO.



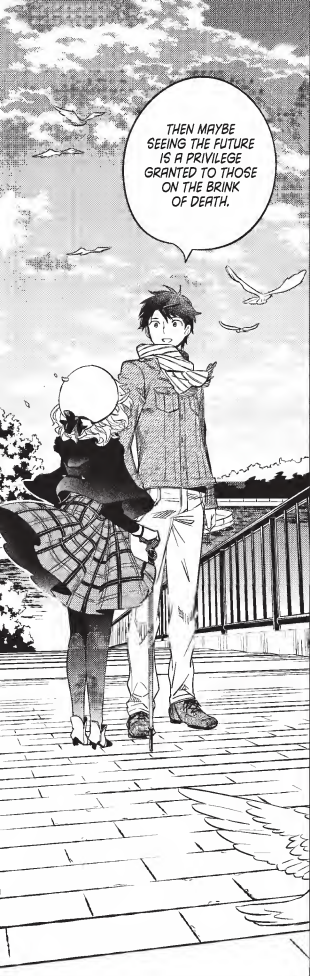
IF I'M
ABOUT TO
DIE ANYWAY,
THE POWER
IS UN-
LOCKED,
AND I
HAVE A
SECOND
TO SEE THE
FUTURES
AND
CHOOSE
ONE.



FIRST,
I CAN'T SEE THE
BRANCHES OF THE
FUTURE UNLESS
I'M FACING
DEATH.



MY BODY
MAY BE DULL
TO PAIN, BUT
SINCE LOOKING
AT THE FUTURE
BRINGS DEATH,
IT INSTINCTIVELY
KEEPS THAT
ABILITY IN
CHECK.



THEN MAYBE
SEEING THE FUTURE
IS A PRIVILEGE
GRANTED TO THOSE
ON THE BRINK
OF DEATH.



...MAYBE
IT'S THAT
WAY FOR
THE KUDAN,
TOO.

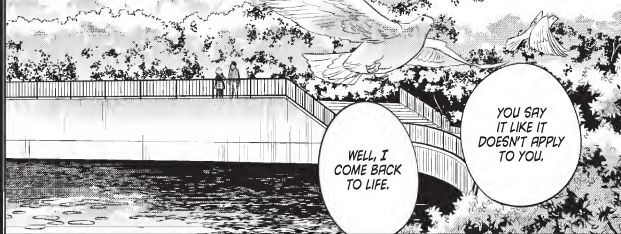


THEY
DON'T DIE
BECAUSE THEY
PROPHECY,

BUT THEY
ARE ALLOWED
TO PROPHECY
BECAUSE THEY'RE
ABOUT TO DIE.



OH.



WELL, I
COME BACK
TO LIFE.

YOU SAY
IT LIKE IT
DOESN'T APPLY
TO YOU.



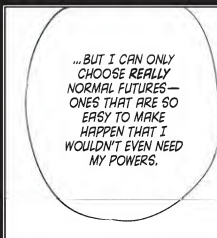
THEN ITS
BRANCH IS
FAR AWAY
AND HARD
TO TAKE
HOLD OF.

AND IF
IT'S NOT A
VERY LIKELY
FUTURE,



AND I CAN
ONLY CHOOSE
A FUTURE THAT'S
VERY CLOSE,
AND PROBABLY
GOING TO HAPPEN
ANYWAY.

WHEN YOU GET
TO A YEAR, OR
EVEN SIX MONTHS
FROM NOW, THERE
ARE TOO MANY
BRANCHES. I
CAN'T SEE ALL OF
THEM, LET ALONE
CHOOSE ONE.



...BUT I CAN ONLY
CHOOSE REALLY
NORMAL FUTURES—
ONES THAT ARE SO
EASY TO MAKE
HAPPEN THAT I
WOULDN'T EVEN NEED
MY POWERS.

...but i
might
get it
to rain

i can't
make
it snow
in the
summer...

IT'S NOT
LIKE I CAN'T
DECIDE THE
FUTURE A WEEK
FROM NOW...



I HAVE AN
ANNOUNCE-
MENT TO
MAKE.

AN AN-
NOUNCE-
MENT?

RUSTLE



YEAH.

SOUNDS
LIKE A LOT
MORE
TROUBLE
THAN IT'S
WORTH.



BY THE WAY,
KURŌ-SAN.



YES!

I GOT THE
RESULTS OF MY
ENTRANCE EXAM.
I PASSED!

Dear

Kotoko Iwanaga-dono

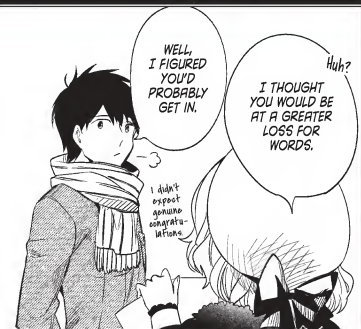
Letter of Acceptance

We are pleased to inform you
that you passed the exam for
acceptance into our law program.

Please complete the enclosed form and
register for enrollment. As of April 1st,
those who have completed the exam

1st
BAM

h,



WELL,
I FIGURED
YOU'D
PROBABLY
GET IN.

I didn't
expect
genuine
congratulations.

I THOUGHT
YOU WOULD BE
AT A GREATER
LOSS FOR
WORDS.

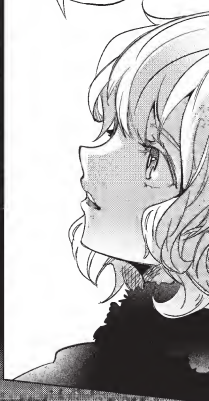
Huh?



Oh.
CONGRATS.

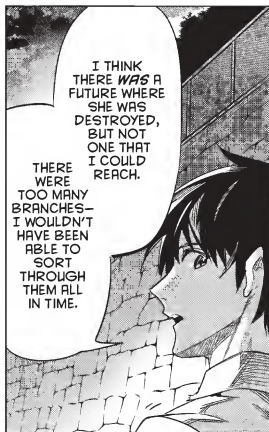


THIS SPRING,
WE'LL BE GOING
TO THE SAME
UNIVERSITY...



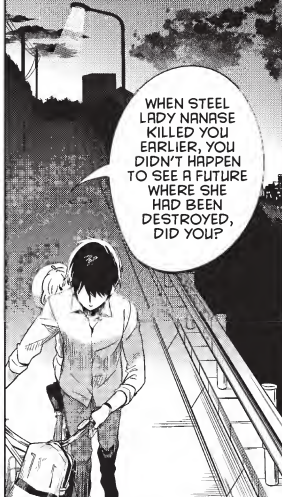
... KURÔ-
SENPAI.

KURÔ-
SENPAI...



I THINK
THERE *WAS* A
FUTURE WHERE
SHE WAS
DESTROYED,
BUT NOT
ONE THAT
I COULD
REACH.

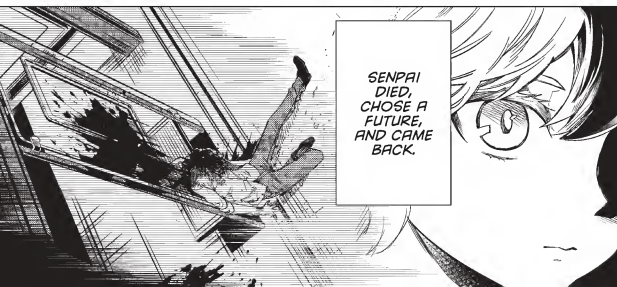
THERE
WERE
TOO MANY
BRANCHES—
I WOULDN'T
HAVE BEEN
ABLE TO
SORT
THROUGH
THEM ALL
IN TIME.



WHEN STEEL
LADY NANASE
KILLED YOU
EARLIER, YOU
DIDN'T HAPPEN
TO SEE A FUTURE
WHERE SHE
HAD BEEN
DESTROYED,
DID YOU?



I BARELY
HAD ENOUGH
TIME TO GRAB
ONE THAT WOULD
DEFINITELY LET
ME BEAT HER.



SENPAI
DIED,
CHOSE A
FUTURE,
AND CAME
BACK.



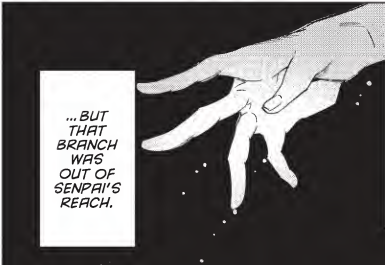
IT WAS
SOMETHING
THAT COULD
EASILY
HAPPEN,
AND THAT'S
HOW HE
WAS ABLE
TO DECIDE
THAT IT
WOULD.

KURŌ-
SENPAI
IS FAST
ENOUGH TO
DODGE THE
BEAM, AND
STRONG
ENOUGH TO
BREAK HER
NECK.

IN THAT
FUTURE, HE
DODGED THE
STEEL BEAM,
GOT THE
STEEL LADY
IN A HEAD-
LOCK, AND
SNAPPED
HER NECK.



BUT HE
COULDN'T
SELECT A
FUTURE
WHERE HE
BEAT HER
ONCE AND
FOR ALL.



...BUT
THAT
BRANCH
WAS
OUT OF
SENPAI'S
REACH.

THE LIKELIHOOD
OF SUCH A
FUTURE WAS
EXTREMELY LOW
AT THAT POINT
IN TIME—IT
MIGHT HAVE
HAPPENED
IF ENOUGH
MIRACLES CAME
INTO PLAY...

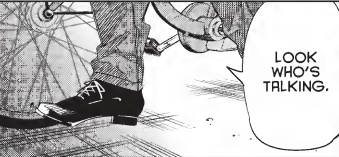


IF I CAN
JUST GIVE
HIM THE
POSSIBILITY,
THEN WE
CAN DEFEAT
STEEL LADY
NANASE.

SO I
NEED TO
PUT THAT
FUTURE
WHERE
HE CAN
REACH IT.



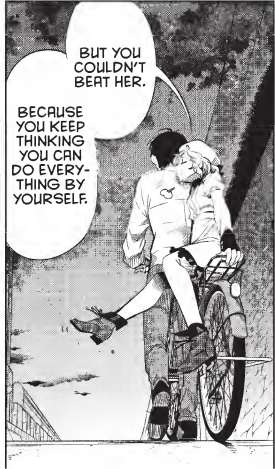
IT WON'T
BE A
GAMBLE—
SENPAI
WILL MAKE
IT A CER-
TAINTY.



LOOK
WHO'S
TALKING.

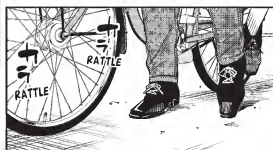


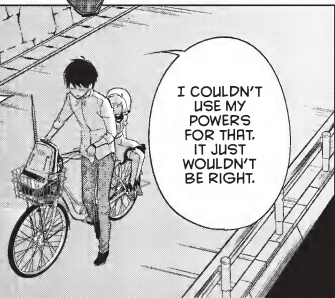
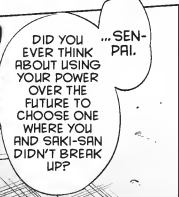
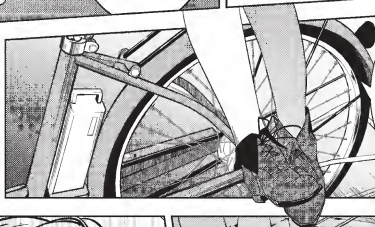
IF I DIE,
I'LL COME
BACK, BUT
IF *YOU* DIE,
THAT'S IT.



BUT YOU
COULDN'T
BEAT HER.

BECAUSE
YOU KEEP
THINKING
YOU CAN
DO EVERY-
THING BY
YOURSELF.







...YOU
NEED AN
IMPOSSIBLE
MIRACLE
TO GET IT
BACK.

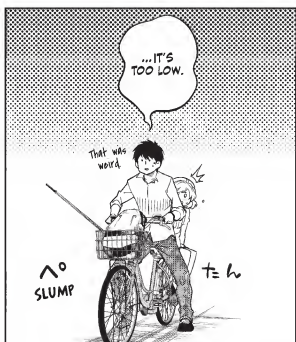
WHEN
SOMETHING
LEAVES
YOU FOR
GOOD...

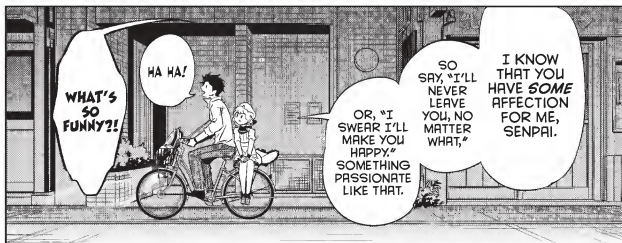
EVEN IF I
DID TRY TO GET
A FUTURE WHERE
SAKI-SAN AND I
STAYED TOGETHER,
I DON'T THINK A
FUTURE LIKE THAT
WOULD HAVE BEEN
WITHIN MY REACH.

THIS POWER IS PRETTY MUCH ONLY GOOD FOR AVOIDING A FEW MISFORTUNES AND MISSED OPPORTUNITIES.

I MAY BE ABLE TO GRAB HOLD OF THE FUTURE, BUT THE CHANGES ARE INFINITE AND COMPLICATED. I CAN'T GET TO WHERE I WANT TO BE WITHOUT SOME EFFORT.

SIGN: NATIONAL TRAFFIC SAFETY CAMPAIGN







I WONDER
IF HIS
IMMORTALITY
HAS MADE HIM
AFRAID TO GET
ATTACHED TO
ANYONE.



HOW
ANNOY-
ING.

HE COULD
AT LEAST
BE TRUE
TO HIS
FEELINGS.



BECAUSE
APPARENTLY,
THAT'S WHAT
BROUGHT HIS
RELATIONSHIP
WITH SAKI-SAN
TO SUCH A
PAINFUL CON-
CLUSION.



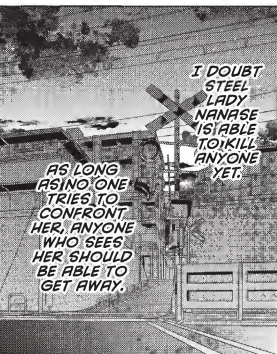
GOT
IT.



ANYWAY,
TO GET TO
THE HOTEL,
GO STRAIGHT
AND TURN
RIGHT AT
THE FIRST
TRAFFIC
LIGHT.

FSH

I HAVE
TO
THINK
RIGHT
NOW.



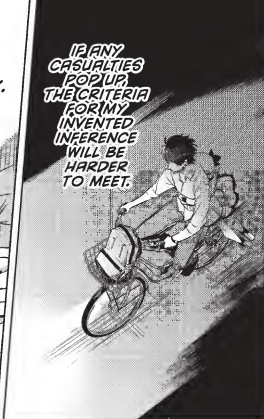
AS LONG AS NO ONE TRIES TO CONFRONT HER, ANYONE WHO SEES HER SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET AWAY.

I DOUBT STEEL LADY NANASE IS ABLE TO KILL ANYONE YET.



IT'S OKAY.

SQUEEZE



IF ANY CASUALTIES POP UP, THE CRITERIA FOR MY INVENTED INFERENCE WILL BE HARDER TO MEET.



I'M TIRED...

SHUT

I gotta get to bed.



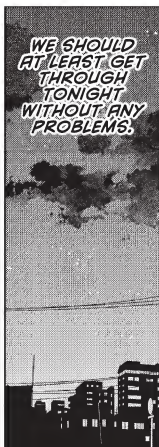
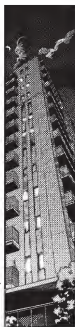
WIBBLE

Drip...



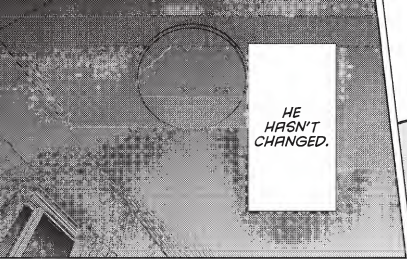
WINCE

DRIP



WE SHOULD AT LEAST GET THROUGH TONIGHT WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS.





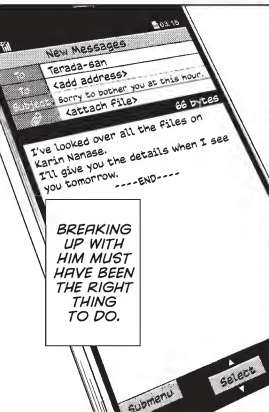
HE
HASN'T
CHANGED.



THINKING
BACK ON
IT, MAYBE
HE WAS
TOO
RESERVED.



HE'S
EATEN
MERMAID
MEAT.
IF HE'S
GOING TO
LOOK LIKE
THAT
FOREVER...



BREAKING
UP WITH
HIM MUST
HAVE BEEN
THE RIGHT
THING
TO DO.



AND HE
JUST
MIGHT—
THAT'S
PART OF
WHY I
DECIDED
NOT TO
MARRY
HIM.





...



CLICK

4



STEEL
LADY
NANASE.

I CAN'T
BELIEVE
SHE WAS
CREATED
BY THIS
WEBSITE.

AND THE
KUDAN—
OUR TRUMP
CARD IN
DEFEATING
STEEL LADY
NANASE—THE
PROPHETIC
BEAST
THAT CAN
SEE THE
FUTURE.

IT'S TOO
HEAVY A
BURDEN
FOR ME.



CLICK

4

CLICK

4

THEY
PROBABLY
HAVE NO IDEA
THAT THEY'RE
BREATHING
REAL LIFE
INTO THE
URBAN
LEGEND.

AND
ALL THE
PEOPLE
THAT
POST ON
THESE
FORUMS.

0001: Name withheld by Request 09/03 20:57 10:00pm
I just got attacked by Steel Lady Nanase
at the park in Higashi-Nakagawa!

0002: Name withheld by Request 09/04 00:07 10:00pm
Just now?
That's the fifth time tonight about someone seeing her or
getting attacked.

0003: Name withheld by Request 09/04 00:07 10:00pm
The eye-witness reports are increasing by the day.

0004: Name withheld by Request 09/04 00:08 10:00pm
Bueno, here is the accident at a river the other day had
something to do with her, too.

0005: Name withheld by Request 09/04 00:10 09/03 22:06 10:00pm
Yuhua
Is that true? I live near there! You're scaring me!

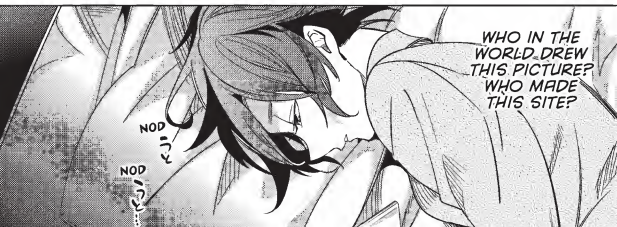
0006: Name withheld by Request 09/04 00:10 09/03 22:06 10:00pm
She can't be in all those places at once. Something's fishy.

0007: Name withheld by Request 09/04 00:10 10:00pm
I've been wandering around town trying to get Nanase on video.
But I haven't seen her once.

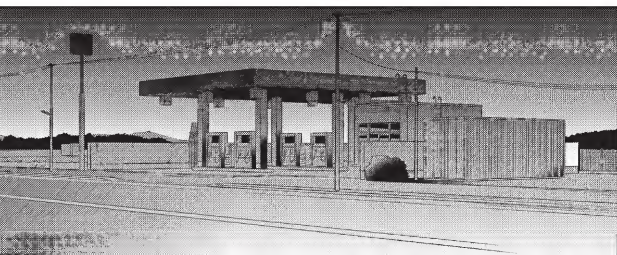
0008: Name withheld by Request 09/04 00:10 10:00pm
She's attacking so many people. I wouldn't be surprised if
somebody ends up dead.

0009: Name withheld by Request 09/04 00:10 10:00pm
I don't want to be crushed by a steel beam...

0010: Name withheld by Request 09/04 00:10 10:00pm
I don't want to be crushed, but I would like to... (Steel Lady
Nanase: The ghost of a beautiful pop star or not? A big risk?
Yes, it does!)



WHO IN THE
WORLD DREW
THIS PICTURE?
WHO MADE
THIS SITE?

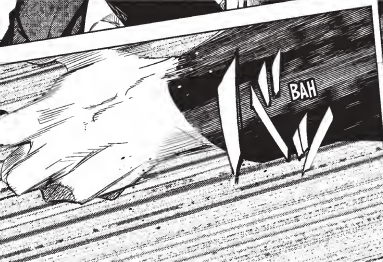




I'M
WITH
THE
POLICE.

WHAT ARE
YOU DOING
OUT HERE,
DRESSED LIKE
THAT, IN THE
MIDDLE OF
THE NIGHT?

A WOMAN
WITH NO FACE,
WEARING A RED
DRESS AND
CARRYING A
STEEL BEAM,
JUST LIKE THE
RUMORS SAID.





ZH

00

WHAT JUST
HAPPENED?

WHAT
THE?



<437> Name: Withheld by Request 09/04 09:15 ID:9jiv
Did you see the news this morning?

<437> Name: Withheld by Request 09/04 09:15 ID:9jivcm
Did you see the news this morning?

<438> Name: Withheld by Request 09/04 09:17 ID:pkndzz
That's why I came here.
Does anybody know the details?

POP

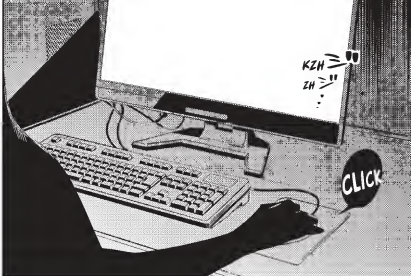
<439> Name: Withheld by Request 09/04 09:17 ID:kredcoo9
Was it the Steel Lady?



11° PAH
> Name: Withheld by Request 09/04 09:24 ID:70903
They say a Makurazaka detective was murdered

<441> Name: Withheld by Request 09/04 09:26 ID:
What does that have to do with
Steel Lady Nanase?
11° POP





POP

<444> Name: Withheld by Request 09/04 09:26 ID:qs
Apparently, his face was smashed in.



IN/SPECTRE




(and I mentioned this in the foreword and on the belly band of the Japanese edition) was mostly inspired by “Lust of the White Serpent,” a story from the *Ugetsu Monogatari* anthology compiled by Ueda Akinari back in the Edo Era.

In “Lust of the White Serpent,” there’s a passage where an actual spectre gives a rational explanation as to why the bizarre phenomenon that she herself had caused through her spectre powers were not actually caused by a spectre, which was an unusual twist that left a deep impression on me. Then there’s the government official who has no trouble believing in the supernatural and uses discretion when dealing with the characters publicly, but when another character hears the rational explanation, he quickly rejects the idea of the paranormal, as if it’s only common sense that there wouldn’t be any such supernatural activity “in this day and age,” and so we see another curious disconnect between worldviews. And I think that disconnect stood out even more because it was written in an older time, about an even older time.

Some of you may be thinking, “So what?” but even as worldviews and logic are warped and twisted, everything somehow comes together the way it’s supposed to and the world looks like everything works just fine, but something’s not right—that’s the sense that I got from that story, and in some ways, I was trying to re-create it.

Now a murder has taken place in the manga, raising the bar on what Kotoko Iwanaga must do to win, but this is where the story will be moving into its solution arc. There are some developments that are going to be even harder to turn into a manga, and I’m worried that Katase-sensei’s going to yell at me, “You can only put so much dialogue into something!” I really can’t just be a casual reader.

Well, I hope you’ll read the next volume.

Kyo Shirodaira

I am Kyo Shirodaira, the original author who, as always, is enjoying this manga as just another reader. This is volume three. Despite what I said, I can’t exactly just read the series as a form of lighthearted entertainment.

Especially because, since I wrote the original book a few years ago, I’ve lost the sense that I’m reading my own work, so I’ll get all haughty, and think things like, “Listen to that dialogue! This author has no idea how to write,” and then, after a minute, I’ll realize that I was the author—I wrote that dialogue—and that gets pretty awkward (then I check the novel to see what I wrote, and sure enough, it was my writing all along). But other times, I’ll think, “Wow, whoever chose that wording really knows how to write,” and immediately reply with, “What a way to talk about yourself!” and get ferociously embarrassed. I just can’t win.

Anyway, I think in this volume we’re finally starting to see what the (Japanese) title *Invented Inference* is referring to. The stage has been set and basic rules presented as to what the story wants to do as a “mystery,” and now it’s time to start the showdown. They even said in this volume that they’re going to present a realistic solution to a supernatural phenomenon, and the plot is proceeding in a definitely mystery-type direction. But I will admit that it is fairly nonstandard in that they’re going to explain how an actual spectre is not a spectre.

But this sort of premise isn’t so unusual for mystery stories. There are lots of earlier examples, and plenty of variations on it, too. You also see it in works categorized as fantasy mystery novels, but of all those, the novel I wrote

YŌKAI:
ZASHIKI
WARASHI





I AM THE
GODDESS OF
WISDOM TO
ALL THINGS
YÖKAI,
MONSTER,
GHOST, AND
DEMON.

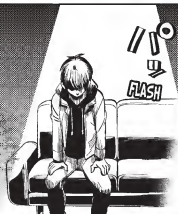
THE EVER-
RELIABLE,
PROBLEM-
SOLVING
PRIESTESS,
KOTOKO
IWANAGA!



HOW DO
YOU DO,
EVERY-
ONE?

MONTHLY MAGAZINE
TRAVELING BONUS MANGA
~PROBLEM SOLVER ☆ KOTOKO-CHAN~

MY LADY,
YOUR
PADDING
...

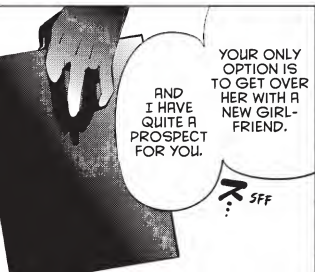


NOW, IT'S
TIME TO SPEND
ANOTHER
EVENING
LENDING AN
EAR TO LOST
LAMBS.

WHO DO
WE HAVE
REQUEST-
ING OUR
SERVICES
TONIGHT?









WHY DO YOU SOUND SO UNSATISFIED?

HMMM...



IT'S A MARRIAGE INTERVIEW PHOTO! SHE'S 17!

IF YOU PLEASE!

IT'S JUST... HER AGE.

IS THIS A SHICHI-GO-SAN PICTURE?

I'm not into that...



SHE'S PETITE AND FLUFFY, BEAUTIFUL, VERY INTELLIGENT, COMES FROM A WEALTHY FAMILY, AND SHE'S A YOUNG, VIVACIOUS HIGH SCHOOL GIRL.

110
+ KA-POP



FLASH

BOW

MY, MY. OUR NEXT GUEST IS THIS NOPPERA-BÔ*.



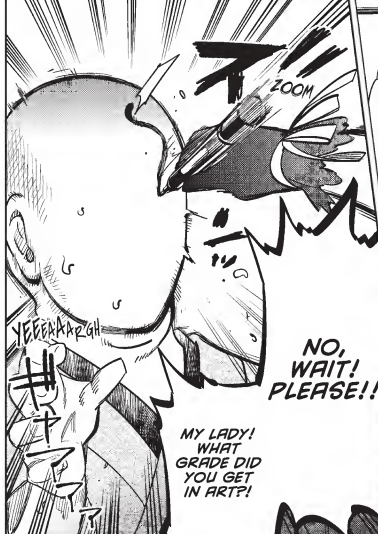
*LITERALLY, "FLAT-FACED BOY," BUT ALSO KNOWN AS A "NO FACE."



NEXT, PLEASE.

I HAVE NEVER HAD SUCH A DIFFICULT CONSULTATION IN MY LIFE.
LET'S PUT THIS ONE ON THE BACK BURNER.



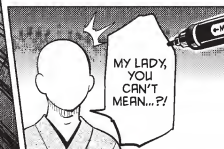


NO,
WAIT!
PLEASE!!

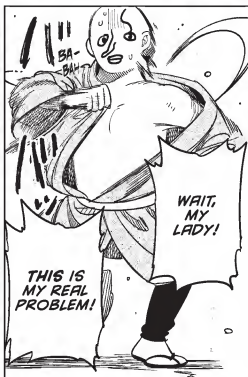
MY LADY!
WHAT
GRADE DID
YOU GET
IN ART?!

ALL RIGHT!
LEAVE IT TO ME/
TO A GODDESS OF WISDOM LIKE
MYSELF, YOUR
PROBLEM IS
A PIECE OF
CAKE!

POP
は?



MY LADY,
YOU
CAN'T
MEAN...?!



THIS IS
MY REAL
PROBLEM!



I'M
GOING
TO MAKE
HIM SO HOT,
J'NNY DEPP
WILL PALE IN
COMPARI-
SON.

KURŌ-
SAN,
HOLD HIM
DOWN.

SURELY
THIS IS
SOME
KIND
OF A
JOKE!

I HAVE AN
EYE IN MY
BOTTOM!

FLASH

YÔKAI: SHIRIME (BUTTOCKS EYE)

A YÔKAI THAT, UPON MEETING A HUMAN, WILL STRIP, NAKED AND SCARE THEM WITH A BLINDING FLASH FROM THE SINGLE EYE ON THEIR POSTERIOR. ITS QUICK AND EFFICIENT MOVEMENTS PLUNGE THOSE WHO SEE THEM INTO THE DEPTHS OF TERROR. BELIEVED TO BE A TYPE OF NOPPERABÔ.

WAAAAH!

...NEXT
GUEST,
PLEASE.

OHO...

HOW'S
THIS?

IT'S
WARM.

WHERE
WILL I
EVER FIND
HAPPINESS?!

ANGUISH

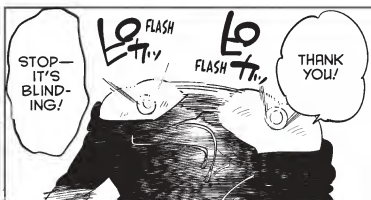
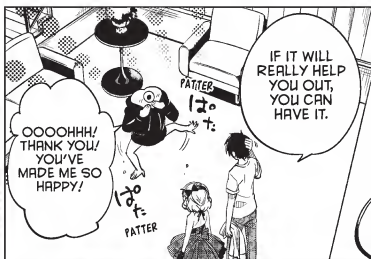
ANGUISH

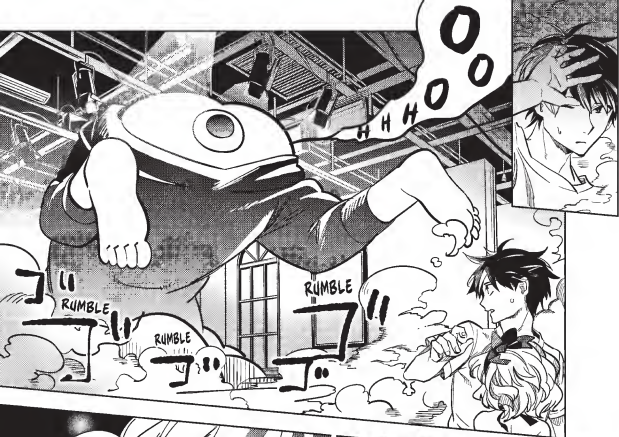
I SHOW MY
FACE, AND
PEOPLE ARE
SCARED, SO
I SHOW THEM
MY EYE AND
THEY THINK I'M
SOME KIND OF
PERVERTED
DEGENERATE.

KURÔ-
SAN, IF
I MAY.

IN THAT
CASE,
LET'S
APPROACH
YOUR
PROBLEM
FROM A
DIFFERENT
ANGLE.

HMM...



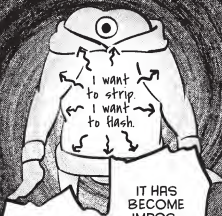


AND YOUR HOODIE'S ELASTICITY IS SO GREAT THAT THE ENLARGEMENT HASN'T TORN IT AN INCH!

I SUSPECT THAT BY FORCING CLOTHES ONTO IT, I'VE DISRUPTED THE SPECTRAL ORDER THAT MAKES A SHIRIME THE YŌKAI THAT IT IS, AND THAT CAUSED IT TO GROW.

...?

...CAUSING IT TO GO MAD!



IT HAS BECOME IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE SHIRIME TO TAKE THE HOODIE OFF!

THE ENERGY FROM ITS INSTINCTIVE DESIRE TO DISROBE HAS NOWHERE TO GO, SO IT GOES BACK TO THE SHIRIME HIMSELF...

GET HIM IN THE EYE! THAT'S HIS WEAKNESS!

BAM

Can I go home?

KURŌ-SAN!

HUH? YES?

ば
BAH



WHAT
ARE YOU
MUT-
TERING
ABOUT!

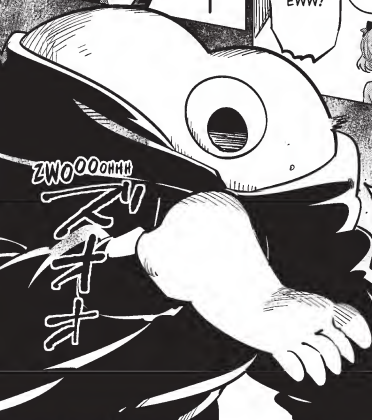
WELL
YEAH,
BUT
EWW!

YES,
ALL YOU HAVE
TO DO IS
CRAWL INTO
ITS BUTT AND
WREAK SOME
HAVOC.

IT
SHOULD
BE EASY—
YOU'RE
IMMORTAL.

BUT
ITS EYE IS
ON ITS
BUTT...

RUMBLE



I'LL BUTT-
BLAST YOU
WITH THE
POISON
GAS
THAT'S
BEEN
BUILDING
UP INSIDE
ME FOR A
HUNDRED
YEARS!

HOW
DARE
YOU
MOCK
ANOTHER'S
APPEAR-
ANCE!



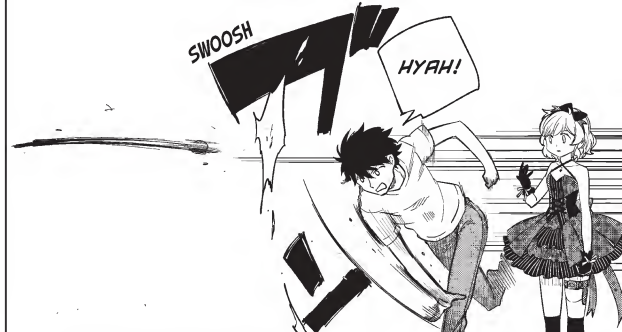
WHAT?

OKAY! I'M
BORROWING
THIS!

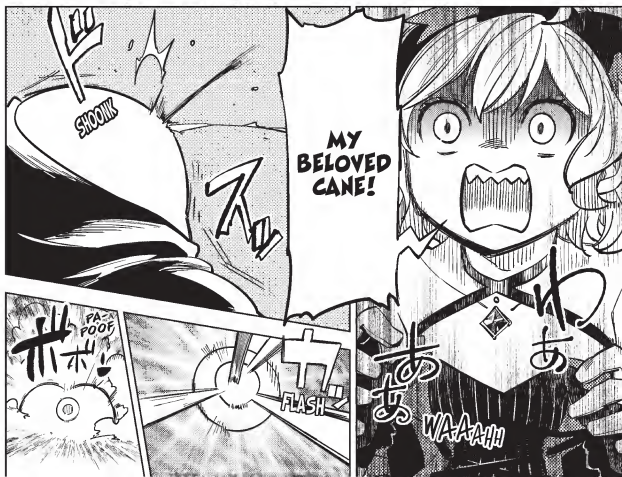


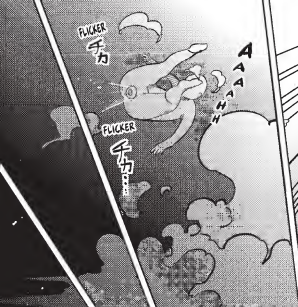
KURŌ-
SAN,
HURRY!
GET HIM
IN THE
EYE!

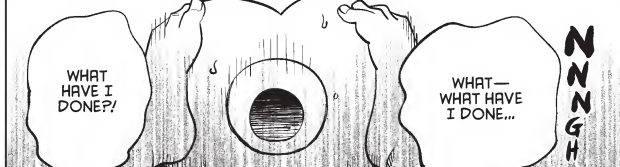
WHA—
WHAT
AN EVIL
THING TO
DO!



SPECIAL CUSTOM-MADE SNAKEWOOD CANE
WITH KITTEN ENGRAVING. PRICE: 14,000,000 YEN (\$14,000)







WHAT HAVE I DONE?!

WHAT—
WHAT HAVE I DONE...

N
N
G
H



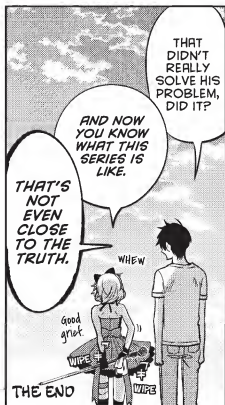
THAT IS
WHAT YOUR
GODDESS OF
WISDOM IS
HERE FOR.

IT'S ALL
RIGHT. EVERY-
ONE STRAYS
FROM THE
RIGHT PATH
SOMETIMES,
BE THEY
HUMAN OR
YŌKAI.

IF YOU
EVER LOSE
YOUR WAY
AGAIN,
COME SEE
ME.

MY
LADY...!

MY...



THAT
DIDN'T
REALLY
SOLVE HIS
PROBLEM,
DID IT?

AND NOW
YOU KNOW
WHAT THIS
SERIES IS
LIKE.

THAT'S
NOT
EVEN
CLOSE
TO THE
TRUTH.

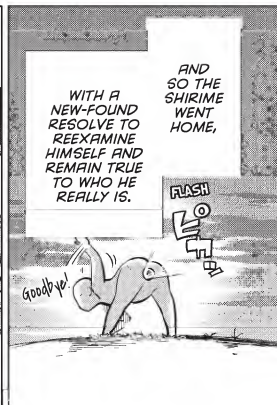
WHEW

Good
grief.

THE END



...



WITH A
NEW-FOUND
RESOLVE TO
REEXAMINE
HIMSELF AND
REMAIN TRUE
TO WHO HE
REALLY IS.

AND
SO THE
SHIRIME
WENT
HOME,

FLASH
LOF
W

Goodbye!



About that bonus manga—I'm sorry.
I think you all know this, but Shirodaira-sensei
had nothing to do with it.
I'm sorry. I hope you'll read the next volume!

Chashiba Katase

Staff: Otōtamu, Tonpu, Yamada, Yamamoto
Editors: O-kawa, T-da; (honorifics excluded)

TRANSLATION NOTES

Goblin cat, page 14

The word *Kurô* used in the original Japanese was *bakeneko*, or "transforming cat." You can always tell a *bakeneko* from a regular cat because it has two tails. According to Japanese folklore, when a cat lives long enough, its tail splits into two and it gains supernatural powers.

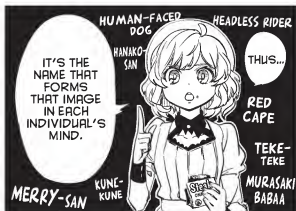


Slit-Mouth Woman, page 22

Slit-Mouth Woman, or *Kuchi-Saké Onna*, is an actual urban legend from Japan, very much as Kotoko described. There are variations as to her weapon of choice—here it's a sickle, but in other versions she carries a butcher's knife or scissors. If her victim tells her she's not pretty, she'll kill them, but if they say she's still pretty even with her mouth slit open, she'll slit their mouth to match.

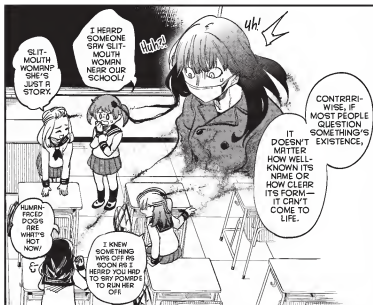
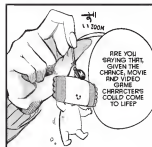
Urban legends, page 23

As the reader may have guessed, all the names behind Kotoko belong to urban legends known across Japan. The human-faced dog is just what it sounds like—a dog with a human face that can speak words and run very fast, and is generally considered to be a bad omen. The headless rider may sound like a character from a certain popular anime or light novel, but the urban legend about a motorcycle racing down the highway with a headless



rider dates from before then, and possibly comes from a 1979 movie. Red Cape, Murasaki Babaa (purple crone), and Hanako-san are all spirits that haunt public restrooms (usually at school). Teke-teke is the ghost of a woman who was cut in half when she was run over by a train, who will chase after those who encounter her by running on her elbows, dragging her torso on the ground. Kunekune is a white, fluttering object seen at the end of wide agricultural fields that drives people insane if they try too hard to make contact. And Merry-san is an abandoned doll that returns to wreak vengeance on the girl who left her.

This is the mascot character of Makurazaka City. *Makura* can mean pillow, and so the city is represented by a character with a pillow for its head. The full name in Japanese is Gû Gû Makura-chan, where *gû* is the Japanese onomatopoeia for the sound people make when sleeping, hence the translators' rendering of Z.Z.



Pomade is a type of hair-styling product used to create the pompadour and it also describes the stereotypical hoodlum that sported the pompadour hairstyle. When the urban legend of the Slit-Mouth Woman was at its peak, rumor had it that one of the ways to drive her off was to chant the word pomade three to six times. Apparently, she

The pillow flipper, page 74

Karin Nanase was a minor, page 91

The age of majority in Japan is 20, so while Karin Nanase could legally smoke in the United States, at age 19, she is still too young in Japan.



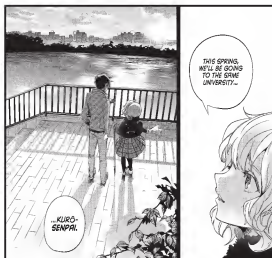
A powerless haunt, page 126

Specifically, this ghost calls himself a *jibakurei*, which means "spirit bound to the earth." This means that he's tied inseparably to the place where he died and cannot leave it.



LoveLove Manor, page 133

This hotel is typical of a certain type of short-stay hotel, known as a "love hotel," which is designed to provide privacy for couples who want to be very intimate with each other, hence its appeal to Kotoko.



Senpai, page 146

For the readers who have been patiently ignoring the translators' use of the word *senpai* because they're not sure what it means, hopefully this exchange has shed some light on the subject. *Senpai* literally means "companion who has gone before," and is used to refer to someone engaged in the same endeavor as the speaker, but who started it first. For example, Kurō started attending the same school as Kotoko before she did. It is also used for coworkers, or people who share a hobby. Kotoko would be excited to call Kurō *senpai* because it indicates

a greater closeness than the more impersonal *-san*. The word for the person who started later is *kōhai*, but it isn't commonly used as a form of address.



Zashiki Warashi, page 172

Meaning "room child," a zashiki warashi is a child ghost that haunts houses and brings them good fortune. They are fond of mischief and especially like to prevent people from sleeping.

Traveling Bonus Manga, page 173

In/Spectre is usually published in a manga magazine called *Shōnen Magazine R*, but this particular bonus manga appeared in *Monthly Shōnen Magazine*.

Shichi-Go-San picture, page 176

Meaning "seven-five-three," Shichi-Go-San is a Japanese festival that celebrates children, specifically three- and seven-year-old girls, and three- and five-year-old boys. Parents dress their children in more formal attire and they visit shrines. In other words, Kurō is suggesting that Kotoko's picture looks like a seven-year-old (or three-year-old) girl. Kotoko, on the other hand, intends for this to be a *miai*, or marriage interview, photo, in which someone will dress in formal clothes to present him or herself looking their best for a prospective spouse.



In/Spectre 3

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

In/Spectre volume 3 copyright © 2016 Kyo Shirodaira/Chashiba Katase
English translation copyright © 2017 Kyo Shirodaira/Chashiba Katase

All rights reserved.

First published in Japan in 2016 by Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.
Electronic Publishing rights for this English edition arranged through
Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.

No portion of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or
by any means without written permission from the copyright holders.

English digital edition published by Kodansha Advanced Media, LLC,
San Francisco.

www.kodanshacomics.com

ISBN: 9781682336076

Digital Edition: 1.0.0

Translation: Alethea Nibley & Athena Nibley
Lettering: Lys Blakeslee
Editing: Ajani Oloye
Kodansha Comics edition cover design: Phil Balsman

